PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This book offers, between the covers of one volume, the varied writings of H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on the subject of Satsang or holy company and the related topic of Svadhyaya or daily study of sacred literature.

The second part of the book throws more light on the subject. Therein Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj analyses in detail the subtle connection and the subtle distinction between the company of a holy man and the company of the Guru and points out clearly the circumstances under which Satsang can prove most fruitful for the Sadhak.

It is a slightly abstract subject, but one which is vital for all spiritual seekers. It is our sincere hope that the pages that follow will open up a glorious new chapter in the lives of many.

—*Publishers*

CONTENTS

The Meaning of Satsang .. 1
The Power of Satsang .. 6
Satsang Bhavans: The Need of the Hour .. 10
Householders and Satsang .. 15
Who is a Mahatma? .. 20
Svadhyaya or Pious Study of Holy Books .. 31
The Disastrous Effects of Evil Company .. 35
How to Conduct Satsang: A Talk to Sannyasins 38
Some Illustrative Stories .. 44
A Miscellany of Poems on Satsang and Svadhyaya 49
Sannyasins and Regeneration of Society .. 55
Select Sayings on Satsang .. 63
The Hindu Scriptures on the Glory of Satsanga 71
Darshan Yoga or Holy Darshan of Living Mahatmas .. 75
Sarva Deva Rishi Bhakta Kirtan Mala .. 77
The Importance of Satsanga and Guru-bhakti 85
Why Svadhyaya? .. 102

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सत्संगत्वे निःसंगत्व
निःसंगत्वे निर्मोहत्वम् ।
निर्मोहत्वे निश्चलतत्त्वं
निश्चलतत्त्वे जीवन्मुक्तिः ।।

By keeping the company of great Mahatmas, one becomes dispassionate. He gets Vairagya. He does not like the company of worldly men. Then he develops the state of Nirmohatwa. He becomes free from infatuation or delusion. Then his mind becomes steady and one-pointed and rests on the Swarupa or Essence. Then he attains liberation or freedom.

From the "Bhaja Govinda Stotram" of
Sri Adi Sankaracharya

कस्तरति कस्तरति मायाम् ? यः संगं त्यजति यो महानुभावं सेवते, निर्ममो भवति ॥

Who crosses, who overcomes this Maya? Only he who abandons evil company, who associates with large-hearted men, and who is free from "mine-ness".

महत्सङ्गस्तु दुर्लभोऽगम्योऽमोघश्च ॥

Companionship of the great ones is again difficult of attainment. It is hardly possible to assign how and when men may be taken into the society of the great. But once obtained, association with the great ones is infallible in its operation.

लभ्यतेऽपि तत्कृपयैव ॥

Companionship of the great ones is gained by the grace of God alone.

From the "Bhakti Sutras" of Maharshi Narada

बिनु सत्संग विवेक न होई।
राम कृपा बिनु सुलभ न सोई॥

The intuition of wisdom or the power of discrimination does not come without having Satsang which is enjoyable or attainable only by those whom Lord Rama chooses or upon whom He bestows His Grace.

सतसंगत मुद मंगल मूला।
सठ सुधरहिं सतसंगति पाई॥

Even the worst rogues are changed into virtuous men only through the association or Sanga of the seers and sages, as Satsanga is itself an ever-beneficial joy-giver.

From "Sri Ramacharitamanasa" of Goswami Tulsidas

Learn wisdom from the saints. They are your saviours. Follow their advice. They will help you, guide you, and lead you to your destined goal.

*   *   *   *

Turn homeward. Enough of your wanderings in the desert of Samsara. There are a few oases in this desert and they are the saints. Drink deep from them and march to the source, your original home.

*   *   *   *

Satsang is thy lifeboat. Discrimination is thy compass. Dispassion is thy anchor. O, Captain of the soul! Steer thy ship fearlessly in this ocean of Samsara and cross to the other shore of immortal life.

From miscellaneous writings of Swami Sivananda

Satsanga and Svadhyaya

The Meaning of Satsang

The word 'Satsang' is the combination of the two words 'Sat' and 'Sang'. 'Sat' means existence absolute, which is Brahman. 'Sat' is the essential nature of Brahman which is permanent in things that change, which is the only reality that upholds the world of appearance.

The same 'Sat', with the accidental attributes of omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence is called Iswara or Paramatman. In brief, 'Sat' refers to Iswara as well as Brahman, both ultimately being the one and the same reality.

'Sanga' literally means company or union. To be always in the company of the Lord, or to be established in Brahman, is the literal meaning of the word 'Satsang'. But, as long as ignorance or Avidya remains, the direct realisation of Brahman is impossible. When ignorance is destroyed by wisdom, the real-nature reveals itself. This is the highest Satsang.

The next possibility is to please God so much by our unflinching devotion that He has to sport with us assuming a gentle form according to our desire, even as He did in the case of the Gopis. But the means to the realisation of this blessed end is also called Satsang or the company of the wise. The means being essentially not different from the end, is also named

after the end. Because the company of the wise leads to the realisation of Brahman (with attributes or without attributes), it is also termed as Satsang. In this sense, Satsang means the company of the Satpurushas. Satpurushas are those who have realised truth as well as those who are aspirants after truth. Those people who have renounced egoism, greed, lust, etc., are Satpurushas. Those people who have attained equal vision, balanced mind, unflinching devotion to the Lord, are Satpurushas. Those people who are endowed with peace, bliss, contentment, simplicity, fearlessness, humility, powerful voice, a face beaming with the glory of saintliness, etc., are Satpurushas.

GRACE OF GOD ALONE MAKES SATSANG POSSIBLE

It is very, very difficult to come into contact with a Satpurusha or a saint. It is more so to recognise a saint. A man of worldly Samskaras wants to weigh the saintliness of a sage by his own conceptional balance, and finding him lacking in weight, discards him as a false saint and thereby he does not get the instantaneous benefit arising out of the contact of the sage. But, even then, the company of the saint exerts an inexorable influence on the person concerned, which he realises sooner or later. Bhagavan Narada says in his Bhakti Sutras: "The company of the great is very difficult, inaccessible, but infallible".

Companionship of the great ones is difficult of attainment. It is hardly possible to assign how and when men may be taken into the society of the great.

But, once obtained, association with the great ones is infallible in its operation. Love of God is obtained principally and undoubtedly by the grace of the great ones, or in other words, from the touch of divine compassion. Companionship of the great ones is gained by the grace of God alone, because there is no distinction between Him and His men.

There is no difference between God and a realised Bhagavata. Both are identical. A sage is God Himself. The Upanishad declares: "He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman". The glory of a sage is infinite and eternal as that of Brahman.

LIGHT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HIS DEVOTEE

Lord Krishna declares in the Gita: "The same am I to all beings: to Me there is none hateful or dear; but those who worship Me with devotion are in Me and I am also in them". Though the rays of the sun fall equally on one and all, it is the faces of the diamonds that dazzle more than anything else. Though a man may possess hundreds of rooms in his house, he delights only in his drawing room which is well decorated. Even so, though God is equally for one and all, He manifests more vividly in the heart of a sage, which is made transparent by purity, which is decorated by the rare jewels of compassion, mercy, self-control, equal vision and wisdom.

The relationship between God and His devotee has been described in three ways. Firstly, both are non-different, because a saint has no separate existence apart from the Lord. The will of the Lord is the will of the sage. The reflection of the sun has

merged in the real sun. The salt-doll has become one with the ocean. The dew-drop has slipped into the shining sea. The Jiva has merged in the Lord. When the egoism has vanished, there is no difference between the Lord and the sage.

From another standpoint, the Lord is considered to be greater than a saint, because a saint is but the way. One is not satisfied with the Darshan of a sage; he asks, "O Maharaj! Please show me the way to God-realisation. How am I to conduct myself for the attainment of the highest Purushartha or liberation?". This proves that the Lord is greater than the saint. But this is a relative standpoint. A person still in bondage may come into contact with a sage, but it is very difficult for him to realise the consciousness of the sage which is non-different from the Lord. As long as he does not realise this, a sage appears to be merely a way to a certain goal. But, in reality, he is the way as well as the goal.

And as far as the sage is both the way and the goal, he is even considered greater than the Lord Himself. Saint Tulsidasji says, "I have firm belief that a devotee of Rama is greater than Him". All the saints declare thus unanimously.

Though the Lord is everywhere, without the grace of a Guru, He is not to be realised. The saint or Guru alone is the way. There is absolutely no other way leading to escape from Samsara.

Saints are the living manifestations of the Lord. Seeing a sage, meditating on him, remembering him, touching his feet, talking with him, etc., bring about a sudden inflow of God's grace into the individual, by which the latter quickly attains the lofty peak of spiritual knowledge.

Tulsidasji sings the glory of Satsang in glowing terms: "O dear one! Should you keep the happiness of heaven and of all the higher worlds in one pan of the balance and the happiness that arises out of Satsang in the other, the latter will outweigh the former".

There is no boat other than Satsang to take you across the ocean of Samsara. Blessed is he who has come into contact with a Satpurusha, a realised sage. More blessed is he who has cultivated unflinching devotion to his feet. And the most blessed is he who has attained communion with the consciousness of the sage.

In case contact with a sage is not possible, one should try to be in contact with sublime books like the Upanishads, the Gita, the Yoga-Vasishtha, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, etc. He should try to take resort to holy places and there engage himself in discoursing upon, or hearing of, the glory of God. This also is Satsanga for him. Whatever helps one towards the attainment of purity of heart should be considered as Satsang.

Sri Rama Krishna Vivekananda Seva Sad
Shivala Mandir Srinagar Kashmir.

The Power of Satsang

The glory and power of Satsang, association with the wise, saints, Yogis, Sannyasins and Mahatmas is indescribable. Even a moment's company is quite sufficient to overhaul the old vicious Samskaras of the worldly people. The magnetic aura, the spiritual vibration, and the powerful currents of developed adepts produce a tremendous influence on the minds of worldlings. Service of Mahatmas purifies the minds of passionate men very rapidly. Satsang elevates the mind to magnanimous heights. Just as a single match-stick burns huge bundles of cotton in a few seconds, so also, the company of saints burns all thoughts and Samskaras of passion within a short time. The only potent specific for inducing burning Vairagya and burning desire for liberation is Satsang and Satsang alone.

The association with the holy sages is quite enough to instil in a soul wisdom and love. Vidya originates in those whose faults have been washed away by the mighty force of Satsang which has independent power of destroying all faults and originating Vidya.

Those who hear the life-giving words of good men have their hearts that are tainted with evil,

purified. They ultimately reach the lotus feet of the Lord. This shows that the words of good men have the power of purifying the soul and carrying it to the feet of the Master.

HOW SATSANG GRADUALLY LEADS TO THE VISION OF GOD

First comes keeping company of the righteous and good men and serving them. By such company and service, there dawns the knowledge of the essential nature of one's own self and of the divine or supreme Self. Then comes Vairagya or a total disgust for everything of this world and of the next, with a yearning for the Lord. This is Bhakti. When Bhakti becomes strong, the man becomes the beloved of the Lord, and because of such dearness to Him, he is chosen by Him. Then comes the direct vision of the Lord.

Vivekananda attended the Satsanga of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Jnanadeva had the Satsanga of Nivrittinath. Gorakhnath attended Satsanga of Matsyendranath. The practice of feeling His presence in everything, of seeing God in every face and in every object is, in itself, a grand sublime Satsanga. Hail, hail to Mahatmas who hold Satsanga and to sincere devotees who attend them! Very often, devotion is kindled by association and talk with devotees. As flame is enkindled by flame, so heart catches fire from heart. Says Sri Krishna: "The wise adore Me in rapt devotion. With their minds wholly in Me, with their life absorbed in Me, enlightening each other, ever conversing about Me, they are satisfied and delighted".

In the East, students are always advised to seek the company of holy men and listen to their conversation, thus fanning into flame a little spark of love and earnestness. Only a strong soul can keep itself glowing in isolation, and the beginner will do well to take the opportunity that comes in his way to strengthen his own aspirations by communion with others who share them.

INDISPENSABILITY OF SATSANG FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT THINK FOR THEMSELVES

There are very few people in this world who can correctly think for themselves, who can do Sadvichara and depend on their own intelligence in their pursuit of Truth. These few people are, of course, their own Gurus or teachers, and do not require any other teacher. Their Satsanga consists in their meditation on the Highest Intelligence or Consciousness.

Those who cannot think correctly and cannot depend on their own thoughts, feelings and volitions, who are swayed by passions and delusions, constitute the majority of mankind. Such people require a wise and good Guru or teacher in order that they may be enabled to lead a well-directed life. Their Satsanga consists in the company and service of, receiving direct instructions from, and observing and emulating the conduct of their Guru or teacher who is wise and good.

It is only the sincere and earnest Sadhak who knows the real value of Satsang or association with saints and sages. Real Satsang gives the aspirant inner spiritual strength to face the struggles of life,

overcome temptations, kill inner cravings, fill the mind with positive divine thoughts.

The company of a saint or a sage can transform evil into good. Faith in God, in scriptures, attachment and devotion to God, slowly develop in those who do regular Satsang. Even a sinner has a hope through the Sanga of a Mahatma or Mahapurusha. Rogues Jagai and Madhai, dacoit Ratnakara, were all transformed into saints by Satsanga.

Satsanga is the greatest of all the purifiers and illuminators of man. Satsanga is the one panacea for all the ills of life. There is nothing so inspiring, elevating and solacing as Satsanga. Satsanga is the sap of life, the elixir of thought, the joy of the soul. There is no other way to the attainment of supreme blessedness than Satsanga. There is nothing so great, so important, so indispensable, so delightful, as Satsanga. This is the only way and there is no other.

Satsang Bhavans: The Need of the Hour

Satsang Bhavans are a great need of the hour. Many people can gather together. When people join together and sing the Lord's Name and pray, a great spiritual force is generated. That is the glory of Satsang. If you shut yourself up in your room and do Japa and meditation, you may not progress so fast, but if you form a small Satsang group and all of you do Japa together and meditate together, the spiritual force generated will help you all. You will make rapid and wonderful progress. When you attend a Satsang, you will forget the worries of the world. You are in an entirely different atmosphere.

It is Satsang alone that can transform man in these days. Sublime ideas must be constantly dinned into the ears of man. Then only will his heart be transformed.

Now-a-days there is such dishonesty in business that every article is adulterated. Adulteration of foodstuffs is rampant everywhere. Man is selfish and has no sense of duty. At the moment of death, your conscience will prick you. You will have no peace of mind either now or at the time of death

or ever afterwards. Dishonesty kills your conscience; it is worse than Atma-hatya. It is like killing yourself. Be honest. Have a pure heart, clean mind and clear conscience. Even if you are poor, you will be happy. If you are honest, the whole wealth of the world will belong to you.

BUILD SATSANG BHAVANS EVERYWHERE

The man is not rich, because he has a lot of money in the bank. Only that man is really rich whose heart is rich. Each virtue is worth more than a crore of rupees. Cultivate a charitable heart. You are spending a lot of money on the clothes of your wife and children; give plenty of money in charity for the construction of temples and Satsang Bhavans. They are great assets to the whole world.

Through your charity, there must be a Gita Bhavan in every town, in every Mohalla. What a wonderful thing it will be! There will be Satsang everywhere. In those Satsangs people will learn of Dharma. They will be transformed. The entire society will be transformed. Sublime ideas and ideals will enter the hearts of people. Dishonesty will disappear. Dharma will reign supreme. People will become "Sarvabhutahiteratah", devoted to the welfare of all beings, feeling that the entire world is one family.

One life, one consciousness, one Self, dwells in all, just as one sun and one moon shine over the whole world. But the power of Maya shows everything as different. The scavenger and the cobbler are your own Self. It is Maya that makes you feel, "This man is inferior and the other man is superior".

Vedanta speaks of unity. All are one. This truth has to permeate your entire being. That can be done only through Satsang.

You should constantly hear and dwell upon such sublime ideals. Some Vedantic students go about saying, "There is no world in the three periods of time". But, if there is a little less salt in their Dal or less sugar in their milk, they would be upset. This lip-Vedanta will not do. You have to be practical Vedantins. You can become practical Vedantins only through constant Satsang.

LEARN THE PRINCIPLES OF REAL LIFE THROUGH SATSANG

You must learn the principles of real life through Satsang. Real life is living for others. You beautify yourself by wearing diamond rings and Benares Sarees. Is there beauty in diamond rings and Benares Sarees? Seva-bhav, charity is the real diamond. You dress yourself nicely and see yourself in a mirror a thousand times, does that give you beauty? Beauty is within. Infinite beauty dwells in the chambers of your heart. *Jyotishamapi Tat Jyoti Tamasah Paramuchyate, Jnanam, Jneyam, Jnanagamyam, Hridisarvasya Tishtitam.* You spend all your time in beautifying this body! Morning you have a shave, in the evening you have another shave. This is all waste of precious time, precious life. You must learn to utilise time properly, through Satsang.

Love all. Embrace all. Be kind to all. Help the down-trodden brothers. Instead of having six or seven shirts for yourself, give a shirt to the poor man. Thus only can you evolve. Thus only can you

realise the Atma which is the One Self that dwells in all.

Try to see good in everybody. Do not develop the Dosha-drishti, the fault-finding nature. Your evil mind, your lower nature, will try to ignore the good qualities that are in a man and try to see only his defects. You will have to cultivate the eye of discrimination. Human nature is such that man tries to see only defects in others; you will even superimpose evil upon persons in whom such evil qualities do not exist. Through Satsang and study, you will have to eradicate this nature. You will have to cultivate the habit of seeing only good in others. Then only will you be able to unite with all. You will be able to recognise the goodness in all. You will not have Ghrina, hatred, etc. You will have to cultivate this habit through Satsang.

INDIVIDUAL SADHANA AND COLLECTIVE SADHANA

What spiritual benefit you cannot get in five years of study, you can have in one Satsang. You have experienced it now.* I am not deceiving you. You actually feel it: Aparoksha Anubhuti. When you sing Kirtan here, you have forgotten the world. What made you forget the world and rise above body-consciousness? It is Kirtan of the Lord's Name; it is Satsang.

Only in Satsang will you be vigilant. You will

*The author was speaking at a Satsang gathering in a Gita Mandir. This chapter is made up of excerpts from that speech.

enter into Bhav-samadhi here. But when you attempt to do Japa in your own room, you will get another kind of Samadhi....deep sleep! One man wanted to know the easiest way of controlling and annihilating the mind. The preceptor said, "Take rice and sour curd to your bellyful. Lie down on a good bed, soft and comfortable. Have good pillows for your head and feet. Relax. Breathe deeply. You will go beyond the mind". That is deep sleep. That is what you will get if you sit alone in your room and try to do Japa and meditation. When you are in Satsang, you are vigilant, and you get the help of the spiritual vibrations of the entire gathering.

Householders and Satsang

This world appears to be very beautiful, charming and attractive. Delicious drinks, luscious fruits, fragrant flowers, sweets and toffees, tea and coffee, beautiful women and magnificent gardens—and the mind is attracted to them. The man who has no discrimination and dispassion is attracted. He lives in Maya, thinks always of Maya, dwells constantly upon sensual objects, and is filled with Asubha Vasanas. He leads an Asuric life in this world.

But, reflect for a moment on the true nature of this world. With all these beautiful things, there is a constant undercurrent of Janma, Mrityu, Jara and Vyadhi—birth, death, old age and disease. Loss of property, death of near relatives and dear friends, dishonour and defeat, these are the things that you experience daily, even though you run after the beautiful objects thinking they will give you unalloyed happiness. You are immersed in sorrow. You are sorely disappointed. You have misunderstood the nature of the world. This is a world of pain, sorrow and death. You cannot get real peace, happiness or bliss in this world, from these sense-objects. Where can you get them?

REALISE YOUR REAL NATURE THROUGH SADHANA AND SATSANG AND ATTAIN IMMORTAL BLISS

Behind these names and forms, behind these fleeting sense-objects, behind these perishable phenomena, there is the Satchidananda Para Brahman, full of bliss, full of eternal peace and wisdom, illumination and enlightenment. Attain this Atma through study of sacred scriptures, meditation, Japa, Kirtan and Satsang. You will be freed from the trammels of the flesh, from slavery to the mind, from the shackles of transmigration.

Avidya, Kama and Karma bind you to this wheel of birth and death. You have forgotten your real essential nature. You are ignorant of your Satchidananda Svaroopa. Therefore you feel that happiness lies in the external objects of the senses. And, desire arises in you for them. Then you exert to obtain them, and Karma results. Karma brings about birth and death.

Therefore, if you want to free yourself from birth and death, free yourself from desires, from attachment, from Asubha Vasanas, and ultimately, from this primordial ignorance, develop discrimination, dispassion, serenity of mind. Practise the Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali Maharshi, Bhakti Yoga of Devarshi Narada, Jnana Yoga of Sankaracharya, Karma Yoga of Bhagavan Krishna or the Yoga of Synthesis which is most suitable to this modern age. You will be freed from birth and death. You will enjoy eternal bliss. This is the goal. This is your Dharma. You have taken birth here as a human being in order to reach this goal here and now, in this

very birth. If you do not strive to reach the goal, you are wasting your life and neglecting this precious gift of human birth.

SATSANG GUARDS YOU AGAINST THE UNREAL GLITTER OF WORLDLY OBJECTS

Forget not the goal. In order not to forget the goal, Satsang is most essential. Satsang keeps the fire of aspiration alive in your heart. It is a shield to protect you from lapsing into lethargy, from gliding back into the old grooves of sense-cravings, from forgetting your goal. Satsang is your best friend, your spiritual nourishment. Satsang is greater than your parents; your parents gave the body, but Satsang gives you spiritual illumination. Satsang is one of the fundamental means for attaining God-realisation. Where there is Satsang, Mahatmas and great saints assemble. They remind you of the Reality; they guard you against the unreal glitter of worldly objects; they save you from the formidable ocean of Samsara. Their glorious example inspires you; their soul-elevating Upadesh is your guide. From Satsang you get practical lessons in control of mind, concentration and meditation.

Satsang is, therefore, indispensable for householders who have to engage themselves in their worldly duties, important for spiritual aspirants who are treading the path of renunciation, and highly beneficial even for advanced Yogis and students of Vedanta. It spiritually awakens the householders, inspires the spiritual aspirants, and sustains the spirit of the advanced Yogis. To the great saints and Mahatmas, Satsang is a pleasure, delight, joy and

Loka-sangraha Seva. Mahatmas wish to share their spiritual experiences with struggling souls and rescue those who are caught in the snare of Samsara. They are the soul of Satsang. The very purpose of convening Satsang is to enjoy the company of these Holy Ones.

THE REAL SATSANG BHAVAN IS IN YOUR OWN HEART

The Satsang Bhavan, the place where Satsang is held, is Vaikuntha, Kailasa or Param-dham, in reality. The real Satsang Bhavan is in your own heart. There dwells the Sat, the Supreme Reality, that Existence Absolute or Brahman. Control the mind by the practice of Yama, Niyama, Asana and Pranayama. Make the mind one-pointed by the practice of Pratyahara and Dharana. Then meditate on the Self, the Atma dwelling in your heart. You can enter into your own Satsang Bhavan daily through self-analysis, introspection, enquiry into the nature of the Self. This will lead to Self-realisation, when you will for ever be one with that Sat, the infinite eternal Existence.

This is your goal. Forget not, Maya is very powerful. With all your good intentions, you will forget this your foremost duty. Therefore, come to the Satsang Bhavan and associate with saints and Yogis who will instruct you how to control the mind, how to practise Pranayama and Brahma-vichara, how to wean the mind from sensual objects, how to fill the mind with Sattva.

Identification with the body and the mind is the cause for all sufferings. In reality, you are Satchida-

nanda-svaroopa; identification with this real Svaroopa is the key to perennial peace and supreme bliss. *Ajo Nitya Saswathoyam Purano*: this Atma is unborn, eternal and ancient. Be regular in your meditation, Japa, Kirtan, prayer. People do Kirtan for some time, attend Satsang for some time; and then they leave off. This is a sad error. Regularity is of paramount importance in Sadhana. Whatever you do, do regularly. Increase the period of meditation gradually. Do not be attracted by the tantalising tinsels of this world. Nobody has been benefited by material possessions. You may have crores of rupees in the bank, you may have a hundred motorcars and a dozen bungalows: but, peace of mind you cannot have from these. You can have peace of mind only if you are regular in Japa, meditation, Kirtan and Satsang. Only when you realise the Self will you enjoy perennial peace. Construct the Satsang Bhavan in your own heart through regular and systematic spiritual practice and realise Him, not in the unknown future, but right now this very second. Forget not the goal.

Let me remind you of the last word of the Upanishads. *Tat Twam Asi*: thou art that supreme, infinite, immortal Satchidananda Brahman. Have constant Nama-smaran; even when you are working, mentally repeat *Sri Ram, Sri Ram*. Sri Ram is not only the Avatara of Lord Vishnu, consort of Siva, but He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent Para Brahman. Constantly meditate on Sri Ram. Be good. Do good. Be noble. Be gentle. Be generous. Attain Self-realisation through Satsang, Svadhyaya, Japa, Kirtan and meditation. May Lord bless you all!

Who is a Mahatma?

How to judge a Mahatma? This is most difficult. A Shakespeare only can understand a Shakespeare. A Jesus only can understand a Jesus. A man of experience who has mixed with Sadhus and Sannyasins and lived with them for a number of years may arrive at certain definite conclusions and may infer something, but he may or may not be accurate or correct. Only a Jnani with his Divya Drishti can directly see and understand a Jnani.

A Sadhu may be physically nude. He may not keep anything with him. He may be using his hands as the begging-bowl and be living underneath a tree. He may live in a forest. Yet he may be the greatest scoundrel; he may be the most worldly-minded man with internal and external attachments and all sorts of passions. He may dance in joy when he gets an eight-anna piece for his opium-smoking. His mind may be full of distractions and disturbances. Whereas, a man may live in a busy town or city. He may lead the life of a big Babu. He may wear fashionable dress. He may eat dainties. And yet, he may not have the least attachment or craving for anything. Sri Ramanuja lived amidst luxuries. He preached a life of enjoyment. Raja Janaka had his royal plea-

sures, and yet he said: "My wealth is boundless, but I have nothing. Even if the whole of Mithila were burnt to ashes, nothing of mine will be burnt".

THE MISTAKES THAT HOUSEHOLDERS MAKE IN JUDGING A MAHATMA

Householders make wrong judgements in deciding the nature of a Sadhu. They take into consideration only the external conditions of a Sadhu. Even educated people commit mistakes in this regard. Our present-day university education will not help one to judge the spiritual advancement of a Sadhu or a Mahatma. The spiritual line is totally different.

In Uttarakasi, a young Sadhu was hearing the description of a Jnani of the seventh Bhumika when Swami Devagiri was holding classes on Yoga Vasishtha. He at once pretended to be in the Turiyatita state, the highest state of knowledge. He gave up taking food. He passed urine and motion in the room. This state of affairs continued for fifteen days. When his neighbours inquired what the matter was, he replied that he was in the seventh Bhumika. An intelligent man wanted to test his mental state. He applied *Bichu Katta* leaves to his body. This caused intense burning like scorpion-sting. He cried bitterly. He admitted his folly and began to take food as usual. Such Jnanis are in abundance in the Punjab, Rishikesh and other places now-a-days. Beware of such Jnanis. By applying burning charcoal to their bodies, one can easily test the mental state of such Jnanis.

You can hardly estimate the advancement of a Sadhu by a simple casual talk for an hour or two.

You will have to live with him for a long time, and then alone you will be able to draw some accurate inferences and conclusions. There have been instances of realised persons who had elephants, horses and all royal paraphernalia without being affected in the least by their external objects. They had always Jnana Nishtha and Svaroopa Sthiti amidst busy worldly activities. This is integral development. This is the gist of the Bhagavad Gita. This is the central teaching of Lord Krishna.

What is wanted is mental nudity. Shave the mind by removing attachments, desires, egoism. You can live wherever you like. A town will be a dense forest for you. On the contrary, a thick forest will be just like a busy city if you have a ruffled mind with passions and revolting Indriyas. Jnana is purely an internal state. You will to know your own Self. The external marks are no sure criterion. So do not look into the external things of a Sadhu. A man may take any kind of food, he may dress in any way he likes, he may part his hair in any manner he finds it convenient. These are all non-essentials. Always look into his internal mental state.

WHERE TRUE RELIGION BEGINS

A devotee, a Sannyasin or a Yogi may live on any food he likes. He may dress in any way he likes, he may dress his hair in any manner he pleases. He may live on fruits, dry leaves, water, or on rich delicacies according to his Prarabdha. He may live naked or in rich garments. He may be a great Titikshu or a Tapasvi. But these things have nothing to do with true religion.

Real religion begins when one has gone above body consciousness. Real religion begins when one has gone beyond the petty customs, manners and conventions. These are all meaningless social binding for those who are still after body consciousness. These things have nothing to do for a man who has expanded himself. A real Sannyasin or a Sadhu is above all these things. None in the world can expect a real expanded man to be a slave to all these preliminary social or religious bondages. The worldly-minded persons attach too much stress on dressing and eating, and as such are not able to judge the merits of a real Sannyasin. They look to his externals only and are deceived; and at last they run after him in vain. They are unreasonably prejudiced. They waste good opportunities, and do not derive much advantage from the company of Sadhus. They always find fault for trifling and petty things. They say, "That Sannyasin is eating onions; this Sadhu is smoking; that Mahatma is having his face shaved". If you look on all these petty things, you can never be benefited. A Tibeti Baba, a great living Yogi of Burdwan, is smoking and he takes meat also. What of that! He knows how to convert a Tamasic food into Sattvic food.

SIDDHIS ARE NO TRUE CRITERION OF TRUE SPIRITUALITY

Another great blunder people generally commit is that they judge the enlightenment of Sadhus by the Siddhis they display. In the world generally, the common inclination is to judge the merits and ability of a Sadhu through his Siddhis. It is a blunder in-

deed. They should not judge the enlightenment of a Sadhu in this way. Siddhis are bye-products of concentration. Siddhis have nothing to do with Self-realisation. A Sadhu may manifest Siddhis due to strong passions and intense desires, and if that be the case, he is undoubtedly a big householder only. You must believe me when I tell you that Siddhis are a great hindrance to spiritual progress, and so long as one is within the realm of Siddhis and does not try to rise above it and march onwards, there is not the least hope of God-realisation for him. But, this does not mean that a person manifesting Siddhis is not a realised soul. There are several instances of such persons who have exhibited several Siddhis purely for the elevation and uplift of the world, but never for selfish motives.

During the days of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Dev, a certain Sadhu approached him and showed two Siddhis: one was that he could roam about without being seen by anybody. The other was that light emanated from his anus when he walked. This man after some time entered the apartments of a lady unseen, misused his power, fell in love with her and lost his two powers. In the world generally, the common run of people and even educated persons judge Sadhus by their Siddhis only. It is a serious blunder and hence I seriously warn you.

CRAMMING SCRIPTURES CANNOT MAKE MAN A YOGI

Quoting scriptures is also not a sign to indicate the spiritual development of a person. A man may recite the whole of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the

Brahma Sutras; and yet he may be the greatest and most abominable scoundrel. There are now-a-days many who pose for big Yogins and Jnanis or Jivanmuktas after a little study of some books. Mere theory alone cannot help you in enjoying the fruits of Yoga. Mere intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm, and emotional bubbling cannot help you at all in any way in Yoga practice. Mere posing "I am a Yogi" by cramming a few Sutras from Yoga Darshan is nothing but downright hypocrisy. Yoga Abhyas is not a commercial business. To cheat God, your own self and the public by some false demonstration in some Yogic practice is a heinous crime. There is no Prayaschit for this unpardonable deception. This deserves the maximum punishment.

TITIKSHA ALONE CANNOT MAKE A TAPASVIN

Again, there are some men in the garb of Sadhus or Sannyasins who would talk much about Hatha Yogic Kriyas and run about in the world with pretended Samadhis. One can live on air and water alone, another can remain under the earth for six months, and a third can swallow nitric acid, glass pieces and poisons. These are merely physical trainings and are not the real qualifications of a Sadhu.

The mind has the power to imitate. Great persons like Swami Krishna Ashram lead a perfectly hard life even in Gangotri. Many people are trying to imitate him and pass for great souls or Mahatmas. Young men study Vivekachudamani and Avadhuta Gita and pretend to appear as Avadhuts as described there, without having any internal change. The mind remains the same with its likes and dislikes, passion

and anger. Poor, ignorant worldlings are duped by these external appearances. Titiksha is by itself no sign of spirituality. Sri Pradyumna Kesava, Munsiff of Sitapur, mentioned to me the instance of a Sadhu who could roll on burning sand at mid-day in summer for hours together and yet he used to fight for trifling things with great excitement. These are all mere physical training only. Titiksha is mental. Vairagya is mental. Sannyasa is also mental. A man of strong will can give up all his clothing at one stroke and can live in winter in Gangotri without the least trouble, without any preliminary training.

If Titiksha alone can effect emancipation, even buffaloes and fishes living for twenty-four hours in water should get emancipation. If mere shaving of head can bring about salvation, even goats and other animals whose hairs are shorn should obtain release. If eating the crumbs that are thrown out in the gutter and sleeping in a dung-hill can give salvation, even dogs are entitled to get salvation. Therefore, the conclusion is that we must not be guided by mere external appearances only, but must look into the inner mental state of the man.

WHO THEN IS A TRUE MAHATMA?

Neither through matted locks, nor through fiery lectures and erudition, nor through the exhibition of miracles does one attain perfection or knowledge. He in whom the two currents of Raga-dwesha, egoism, lust and anger are destroyed *in toto* is ever happy and is a liberated sage or Jivanmukta.

Saints are those whose minds are unruffled, who are free from avarice, who have conquered desire, and

who have brought their senses and internal nature under control, who are devoted to the Lord, and who have no longing for anything, who are the same in pleasure and pain, who are free from attachment, who have the attributes of self-control, and who are content with whatever comes in their way.

If you find mercy and humility in a person, then alone can you know that that person is a Sadhu. His heart will melt at the suffering of others. Man has got a sin-hardened heart; when this begins to melt, the Lord manifests Himself there. The Sadhu need not deliver lectures on Panchadasi. He need not necessarily be able to deliver eloquent discourses on the Gita. He may not be able to comment for three hours upon a single Brahma Sutra. But, a sweet aroma will emanate from him. This will attract you to him. This will give you Shanti and an inner bliss when you approach him. All your worries and anxieties will disappear as you near him. His very look will elevate you. Each one of his words will inspire you, will engrave itself on the tablet of your heart. Your nature will be transformed. You will turn a new leaf in your life. Such will be his power. Such is the glory of true mercy and humility.

SATSANG: THE QUESTION OF AVAILABILITY

There is a complaint by householders now-a-days that there are no good Mahatmas. This is a lame excuse. The company of Sadhus is a question of supply and demand. If there is a sincere demand, the supply will come at once. This is the inexorable law of nature. If you are really thirsty, you will find your Master at your threshold. You lead a happy-go-

lucky life, your mind is full of passion and unholy Vasanas. You do not care a bit for higher divine life. You waste your time in idle gossiping and vain, worldly talks. You have become a hopeless slave of passion, greed, and name and fame. And yet you complain: "I cannot get good Satsang". Blame yourself first. Admit your faults. Repent sincerely for your mistakes. Do Prayaschitta. Fast. Pray. Cry bitterly in solitude. Make yourself a deserving Adhikari first. Then come to me. I shall take you to the lotus feet of blessed souls who will put you in the right path, guide you and elevate you to sublime heights. These "oversouls" or high souls are waiting to get hold of the right type of aspirants. Mahatmas are in plenty. Real seekers are few. If you bring a charge, "There are no good Mahatmas", Mahatmas also bring a serious charge, "There are no real seekers after Truth".

Good things are always rare in this world. Musk, saffron, radium, sandal-wood, learned persons, virtuous persons, heroes, philanthropists are rare. When such is the case, what to speak of saints, Yogins, Jnanis and Bhaktas! You will have to equip yourself first with the necessary qualifications of self-restraint, celibacy, calmness of mind, keen desire for liberation, humility, obedience, spirit of service etc., to make yourself fit for their company. If you get their company, the question of your salvation is solved.

HOW HOUSEHOLDERS SHOULD BEHAVE TOWARDS SANNYASINS

The majority of householders have no faith in

Sadhus and even if they meet any good Sadhu, they naturally find fault with his externals and put so many questions as to his previous name, caste, creed, qualifications, relations, age and what not. They forget the very elementary principles of Sannyasins. They will never think that after becoming a Sannyasi, one has to forget all these things, and all the more, this body consciousness. They do not understand that a Sannyasi is no more a Brahmin or a Sadhu or a professor, or a leader of a particular society, creed or sect.

Grihastis should not put such questions to a Sadhu. They can talk only on philosophical points with a view to clear doubts. Then and then alone they can be benefited by Satsang. Satsang is the easiest and quickest means to change the mind of worldly-minded persons towards the spiritual path and to thoroughly overhaul the old vicious and wrong Samskaras. Live in the company of Sadhus. Their company itself is spiritual education.

A sage should be approached with all humility and reverence. If you approach in such a spirit of humility, he will certainly impart to you the divine wisdom.

Householders should approach Sannyasins with fruits in hand, wet with genuine Bhakti. As soon as they meet Sannyasins and get their Darshan, they should do Sashtanga Namaskar with Bhava and Prema. They should not talk anything that is worldly in the presence of Sannyasins. If they have any question to ask, they should always keep ready their question and should invariably take care to see that it pertains to spirituality and God. They should not try to invent some foolish question for fun's sake

as soon as they enter the Ashramas of Sannyasins or their Kutirs. They should not waste much time. Householders may take with them some small presents according to their capacity. Sannyasins are visible gods on earth. There is no Yajna or service greater than service to Sannyasins. It is the most potent purifier. Blessed are those who serve Sannyasins, for they will soon have peace of mind and purity of heart!

Svadhyaya or Pious Study of Holy Books

If you cannot get Satsanga of living Mahatmas, you can take recourse to the study of books written by great souls. This will constitute negative Satsanga. If you study Vivekachudamani, you are really having Satsanga of Sankaracharya for the time being. If you read Yoga Vasishtha, you are really having Satsanga with sage Vasishtha.

In the evening, four or five people can assemble together in a temple or a quiet room and can study for one or two hours either the Gita or the Upanishads, Ramayana, Bhagavatam, etc. Slowly your mind will be purified. You will get taste in the spiritual path. Women also should follow this method.

MOST IMPORTANT BOOKS FOR DAILY READING

A devotee should study books which place before him the ideals of devotion, the glory, the sweetness and the Leelas of the Lord, the stories of saints and the practices which help him to cultivate devotion. Devotion develops by the study of such scriptures.

The most important books are Ramayana, Srimad Bhagavatam, Narayaneeyam, Gita, Vishnupurana, Adhyatma Ramayana, Tulsi Ramayana, (Ramacharitamanas), Vishnu Sahasranama, Sandilya Sutras, Siva Purana, Devi Bhagavata, the Narada Pancharatram, Practice of Bhakti Yoga, Essence of Bhakti Yoga, Bhakti and Sankirtan, Bhakti-rasamritam, songs of Alwars and Nayanars, Thevaram, Thiruvachakam, Dasabodha, Tukaram's Abhanga, Jnaneshwari, Bhakti Rasayana, Bhakti Rasamritasindhu, etc.

HOW THE MIND DELUDES

Earthly objects you want. But with all that, you should never miss a day in meditation, in the study of Gita, Upanishads, Vivekachudamani, all full of spiritual gems. One Sloka will give you Shanti:

Vihaya Kaman Yah Sarvan
Pumamscharati Nisspruhah
Nirmamo Nirahankarah
Sa Santim Adhigachhati

Never forget this.

The mind deludes you. "When I have two cows of my own, when I have a beautiful bungalow in Mussoorie, I will be happy": these are all poor ideas. We want people of Nachiketas' type, aspiring for something beyond time, space and causation. You should have such a strong aspiration, meditation and renunciation, though remaining in the world, like Chudalai, like Janaka. Every day you must study Vivekachudamani, Atma Bodha, Tattwa Bodha, Panchadasi, Vichar Sagar—all these elevating Gran-

thas— and Yoga Vasishtha, the beautiful monumental Grantha on Advaita Vedanta. These will give you Shanti. *Nirmamo Nirahankarah Sa Santim Adhigachhati.* He only gets grace.

BENEFITS OF SVADHYAYA

Be regular in the study of religious books, Ramayana, Bhagavatha, Yoga Vasishtha and other good books for Svadhyaya. If you reflect on the ideas of the Gita and fix the mind on these ideas, this itself is a form of lower Samadhi. Gita is a unique book for Svadhyaya. It contains the essence of all the Yogas and the cream of the Vedas. You can devote half an hour to three hours daily for this purpose according to the time at your disposal. Study of scriptures is Kriya Yoga or Niyama. It purifies the heart and fills the mind with sublime and elevating thoughts.

Svadhyaya inspires and elevates the mind to high spiritual altitude. It clears doubts. It weeds out unholy ideas. It cuts new spiritual grooves for the mind to move on. It reduces wandering of the mind or Vikshepa. It helps concentration. It forms a kind of lower Savikalpa Samadhi. It serves pasture for the mind to graze upon. When you study the sacred books, you are in tune with the authors who are realised souls. You draw inspiration and become ecstatic.

When you cannot get positive Satsang of Mahatmas, Svadhyaya clears doubts. It strengthens the flickering faith. It induces aspiration or strong yearning for liberation. It gives encouragement and illumination. It places before you a list of saints

who trod the path, encountered and removed difficulties, and thus cheers you up with hope and vigour. It fills the mind with Sattva or purity; it inspires and elevates the mind. It helps concentration and meditation. It cuts new Sattvic grooves and makes the mind run in these new grooves.

To translate the precepts contained in the books of the sages and saints into action is to have your afflicted body soothed, to have your bruised soul healed, and to save yourself from all kinds of ills of life which are due to ignorance. Spiritual books act as consoling companions under all vexing circumstances, as ideal teachers in all difficulties, as guiding lights in the nights of nescience and folly, as panacea for evils and as shapers of destiny.

Acquire wisdom by digesting the books of sages and saints, philosophers and mystics. By wisdom, master the secrets of all sciences, know the exact nature of things, tune your localised being or individualised personality with the workings of the divine nature of the Laws of Truth. Wisdom is the key to the plenitude of power and joy. Wisdom annuls countless sufferings, innumerable sins, cuts the root of ignorance, and confers upon you peaceful harmony and absolute perfection.

The Disastrous Effects of Evil Company

The effects of evil company are highly disastrous. The aspirant should shun all sorts of evil company. The mind is filled with bad ideas by contact with evil companions. The little faith in God and scriptures also vanishes. A man is known by the company he keeps. Birds of the same feather flock together. These are all proverbs or wise maxims. They are quite true. Just as a nursery is to be well-fenced in the beginning for protection against cows, etc., so also, a neophyte should protect himself very carefully from foreign evil influences. Otherwise he is ruined totally. The company of those who speak lies, who commit adultery, theft, cheating, double-dealing, who indulge in idle talks, backbiting and tale-bearing, who have no faith in God and in the scriptures, should be strictly avoided. The company of women and of those who associate with women is dangerous.

Vilwamangal attended once the nautch party of Chintamani. His whole Antahkarana was poisoned. He was the virtuous son of a pious Brahmin. All his good traits disappeared. He fell in love with her. He

ruined his life. There are thousand and one instances like this. In the Andhra province, Vemanna also was spoiled by evil company in the beginning. There is nothing more dangerous than evil company. If the wife has no religious tendencies and is of a worldly nature, her company also tantamounts to evil company. That is the reason why scriptures speak very highly of solitary places in the Himalayas and on the banks of the Ganges.

WHAT CONSTITUTES EVIL COMPANY

Bad surroundings, obscene pictures, obscene songs, novels that deal with love, cinemas, theatres, the sight of pairing of animals, words which give rise to bad ideas in the mind—in short, anything that causes evil thoughts in the mind constitutes evil company. Whatever induces in us evil tendencies, impure ideas, and likewise, is to be considered as Kusang. Kusang is an antonym of Satsang. It means 'the company of the evil'.

Place, food, water, family, neighbourhood, sight, literature, criticism, livelihood, and the mode of meditation or worship are the ten most important factors which according to their nature either serve for us as Satsang or Kusang.

Aspirants generally complain: "We are doing Sadhana for the last fifteen years. We have not made any solid spiritual progress". The obvious answer is that they have not totally shunned evil company. Newspapers deal with all sorts of worldly topics. Aspirants should entirely give up reading of newspapers. Reading of newspapers kindles worldly Samskaras, causes sensational excitement in the

mind, makes the mind outgoing, produces an impression that the world is a solid reality, and makes one forget the Truth that underlies these names and forms.

THE SO-CALLED FRIENDS

If you put an ounce of alum in ten maunds of milk, the whole quantity of milk becomes unfit for drinking. Even so, evil company, even for a few minutes, will nullify the good effects created by Satsanga for ten years. Evil company is an enemy of devotion. Give up evil company. Take recourse to Satsang or company of the saints.

The so-called friends are real enemies. You cannot find even a single unselfish friend in this universe. Be careful. Friends come to have idle talks with you and they waste your time. They want to pull you down and make you also worldly. Do not be carried away by the flowery speech of such friends. Cut off connection ruthlessly. Live alone at all times. Trust in that Immortal Friend who dwells in your heart. He will give you whatever you want. If you cannot have positive Satsang of Mahatmas, have negative Satsang with books written by realised sages, saints and Bhagavatas.

How to Conduct Satsang: A Talk to Sannyasins

Hari Om! Adorations to Brahman! Salutations to Sri Sankara, Mahapurushas, and Sannyasins!

A Sannyasin is one who has renounced (*nyasa*) the Deha-adhyasa, body-idea, selfishness, Vasanas, egoism, Abhiman. The four Kumaras of Brahma (Sri Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara, and Sanatsujata), Sri Dattatreya, and Sri Sankara are the pioneers in this path of pure Nivritti-marga. They are the fathers for this Order of Sannyasa.

TREND OF THE TIMES

The world wants economic, racial, social, political, psychological, industrial, and also spiritual advancement. The spiritual side should never be ignored. That is the basis. That is the be-all and end-all. In these days, leaders in the Karma-yogic field lay stress on action alone. They have totally ignored the spiritual side of life. Even Sannyasins of various institutions are doing social service only. Some Sannyasins have scholarly erudition only and they command a little respect for some time. They, too, have thrown aside the meditative side of life.

They are not able to produce a real and lasting impression on the minds of the public, because they have not got the real spiritual stuff or inner Atmic strength at their back.

Spiritual men, Yogins, Jnanins, and Sannyasins should appear on the platform like the comet or the second-day moon of the month of Kartik, like Lord Jesus for a short time, should pour forth their energy and turn out tremendous work and disappear from the field. The work of holding spiritual classes for longer times and starting Ashrams belongs to the junior Sannyasins. It will not suit the temperament of fiery spiritual giants. They will inundate the land with spiritual waters or the nectar of divine knowledge in a short time, just as the Ganges does for four months in the year.

TEMPTATION OF COMFORTABLE LIVING

No Sannyasin or householder should start an Ashram for the sake of his comfortable living. Many Sannyasins are pure in the beginning when they start an Ashram, I mean when they are poor. When they become rich, when they have got enough admirers and Bhaktas, the spirit of selfless service dwindles away, giving place to selfish motives in their hearts. The object with which they started Ashrams gets frustrated. Then it becomes a money-making institution. People have no attraction. If the head of the institution leads a life of Vairagya and absolute renunciation, the Ashram stands as a centre or nucleus of perennial peace, bliss, and joy. It attracts millions of people. The world is always in need of such Ashrams with such spiritual giants

as their heads.

Some young Sannyasins take a course of *nux vomica* seed, swallow a hundred and twenty seeds in two years, study Laghu Siddhanta Kaumudi and Nyaya for three years, imagine they have become real Siddhas, and mix freely with worldly-minded persons. This is a very grave mistake. *Nux vomica* produces impotency. Impotency is not establishment in Brahmacharya. They will have a downfall soon. This goes without saying. Even perfect Jnanins and full-blown Yogins should be very careful. They should avoid indiscriminate, promiscuous mixing with worldly-minded persons. The sight of pairing of fish excited a developed Rishi. The jingling sounds of the bangles of a lady, the sight of even bordered or coloured clothes, causes severe excitement in the mind. They have got their own impure associations. Passion is very powerful. Mysterious is Maya. Beware, O aspirants!

It is the tongue and the palate that force the indisciplined young aspirants, Brahmacharins, and Sannyasins to come in close contact with householders under the garb of doing Satsang. O aspirants! Is it for satisfying the tongue you have left your parents and renounced position and property and embraced Sannyasa? Or, is it for attaining Self-realisation? If it is for the former, you would have done very well by earning money in the world. Do not bring disgrace to the order of Sannyasa. If the tongue is uncontrollable, remove the Gerrua garb and go back to the world, do some work and earn money. Evolve through Karma Yoga. No control of mind is possible without control of tongue.

When one puts on the orange-coloured robe, he

must remember that he has entered a noble order of life and that great responsibility rests on his shoulders and that he is going to become soon a religious and spiritual teacher for the world. He must try his level best to possess all the noble, divine virtues and to lead an ideal life of purity and Vairagya.

IS THIS SATSANG?

Satsang has degenerated in these days. It has dwindled into some kind of mental recreation or amusement. Mere Vedantic gossiping for one hour in the evening between Sannyasins and householders with a mixture of some idle, worldly talk, some politics, some scandal-mongering and backbiting, some silly giggling, guffaw, and namby-pamby sentimental outpourings in vague platitudes is labelled as Satsang. The minds of the Sannyasin who does Satsang and of the hearers remain in the same state even after a course of Satsang for several years. There is no elevation and spiritual progress.

When Sadhus and Sannyasins move in the world, they should show an exemplary life of Vairagya to the householders. They should get from the householders the bare necessaries of life only. They should not mix with them very freely. They should live in a solitary place outside the village or town. They should conduct spiritual classes in a serious manner. They should not talk on worldly matters in the interval. They should not bring in too many stories that excite laughter. They should not cut jokes. There must be solemn serenity. The whole audience must be spell-bound. There must be pindrop silence. Then only the householders will be influenced. They will

feel they have got something from the Satsang.

KHEER-PAROTTAH BIRDS

The moment a Sannyasin begins to ask from householders several things frequently, he loses his respect and influence. He is forced to leave the place immediately. Some shameless Sannyasins live as parasites amongst householders for months together. They are 'Kheer-Parottah' birds. They are not real Sannyasins. In the coming census report, the authorities should be very careful in forwarding their reports. These persons should not come under the category of Sadhus and Sannyasins. They are professional beggars in coloured garb, like the wolf in the skin of a lamb. There must be a genuine record of true Sannyasins. What is the use of swelling the number of Sadhus and showing a figure of 74 lakhs of Sadhus? You will not find more than 2,000 good cultured Sannyasins who are useful to themselves and to the country at large. A real Sadhu or Sannyasin is like a glorious sun. He shines during day and night.

A Sannyasin or Sadhu can do more solid and efficient work at the very threshold of his cottage than by moving about from place to place and delivering lectures on platforms. When the flower blossoms, it does not send any invitation to the bees. The bees come by themselves. Even so, real seekers after Truth will flock to the real Sannyasins at their very door. Sannyasins need not move about and advertise. In platform-lectures, there is only temporary stimulation for half an hour. There are some noise, fights, quarrels, claps, "hear, hear" sounds

from some corners. Only real Adhikarins will go to meet Sannyasins at their cottages. The hearts of these aspirants can be really pierced by the instructions of Sannyasins. Training of aspirants is the highest service which a Sannyasin can do. Each aspirant will become a spiritual nucleus, or radiating or broadcasting centre of joy, peace, and knowledge. When a Sannyasin moves, his time is wasted. All sorts of people come to meet him out of curiosity.

Real Sannyasins are the beacon-lights and torch-bearers of the world. Just as the lighthouse sends its light to the distant steamers in the far-off sea, so also the Sannyasins radiate their divine light to people of far-off climes who are immersed in the mire of darkness and ignorance. They can move the whole world.

Glory to real Sannyasins who have renounced everything, who are treading the path of Truth! Hail, hail to Sannyasins who are resting in their own Svaroop, the Brahma-nishthas! Glory, glory to Parivrajak Acharyas, the Brahma-vidya Gurus who are disseminating the knowledge of the Self far and wide! May their blessings be upon us all!

Some Illustrative Stories

I. RISHI VISVAMITRA AND VASISHTHA

Visvamitra Rishi and Vasishtha had a dispute on one occasion. Visvamitra was a great Tapasvin. He created a third world for Trisankhu through his power of Tapascharya. Visvamitra said to Vasishtha: "Tapas is greater than anything else in this world". Vasishtha raised his objection and said, "Satsang is even superior to Tapas". Then they both decided to go to Brahma for obtaining his opinion on this point. They approached Brahma and placed before him the matter for his final decision. Lord Brahma said, "I am busy with my work of creation. I have no time. Please approach Lord Siva. He has ample time at His disposal. He has got no other work now. His work begins only when Pralaya comes".

Thereupon, Visvamitra approached Lord Siva for obtaining his views and final decision. Lord Siva said, "Now I am going to see one of my devotees. I have no time now. Please go to Lord Vishnu. He will give a patient hearing to this subject". Then they went to Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu said, "I cannot decide this matter. Please go to Adi Sesha. He is ever repeating Ram Nam through his thousand ton-

gues. He is a great devotee. He is the proper person to give the final decision. He is very wise too".

Thereupon, they went to Adi Sesha and placed before him their view-points. Adi Sesha replied, "Surely I will give my definite opinion. Please remove the burden of this earth from my head. Then only I will be able to give my view on this subject". Then they both asked, "O Adi Sesha! Please tell us the way to remove the burden". Adi Sesha replied, "Please give the fruit of your Tapascharya and Satsang. I will be relieved of the burden".

Visvamitra said, "Is that all? Now I give you the fruit of my Tapas of one hundred years". Adi Sesha was not relieved of the burden on his head. Then Visvamitra said, "Now I give you the fruit of my Tapas for one thousand years". Then also Adi Sesha was not relieved of his burden. Then Visvamitra said, "Now I give the fruit of my Tapas of my whole life". Then also Adi Sesha was not relieved of his burden.

Then Vasishtha said, "I give you the fruit of my Satsang for a second". At once Adi Sesha was relieved of the burden on his head.

Thereupon Visvamitra put down his head in shame. He did not speak a word either to Adi Sesha or Vasishtha. He fully realized that Satsang was superior to Tapas. His pride of Tapas tumbled down.

Satsang is a safe mighty boat which helps the aspirant to cross the ocean of Samsara. The glory of Satsang cannot be adequately described in words. All scriptures eulogise Satsang very highly. If one takes recourse to Satsang, he will get everything. Satsang is the only potent means to overhaul the vicious Samskaras and to infuse dispassion in the

heart. Satsang is a formidable fortress to protect the aspirants from the onslaughts and temptations of Maya. Without Satsang, you cannot have even an iota of spiritual progress.

Satsang, Shanti, Santosh, and Vichara are the four sentinels who stand in front of the door of Moksha. Satsang is the seniormost sentinel. If you make friendship with him, the other three sentinels will at once become your friends and you can easily enter the supreme abode of Moksha and eternal bliss.

II. SAINT HARIDAS AND THE FALLEN WOMAN

Once saint Haridas, a disciple of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, in the course of his wanderings, reached a village. He used to engage himself day and night in the chanting of the Lord's Name. A police superintendent who lived nearby was disturbed by his Kirtan. In order to pollute him, the police officer devised a plan. He sent a very charming prostitute to Haridas for the purpose. In the night, the prostitute, proud of her beauty and amorous glances, went to the saint. But how can a saint waver from his unflinching devotion? Haridas did not stop his chanting for the whole night. Early in the morning, seeing her before him, he said: "Please come next night. I may be able to talk with you then". So saying, he resumed his work. "What sort of man is he?" she wondered, "But to-morrow I will be successful". Thus thinking, she went away.

The next night, she came again with double enthusiasm. But, again the same thing happened. She thought within herself, "He must have attained something more beautiful than myself. This must be the

reason. Otherwise, he would have fallen into the trap of my beauty as a moth falls into the flame. Let me also attain the Beauty of all beauties which has intoxicated this saint".

The contact with the saint transformed her. She began to yearn for the attainment of God. The saint gave her a rosary and a seat and ordered her to distribute all her wealth among the poor and to engage herself in the chanting of the Lord's Name.

In course of time, the unholy woman became a holy devotee of the Lord. She had His Darshan and attained supreme blessedness. Such is the glory of Satsang.

III. SHAMPOOO MY WAIST WITH YOUR FEET!

Once a saint, in order to test his disciple, ordered him to shampoo his waist by his feet. The saint said, "My waist is paining. Will you, my dear disciple, shampoo it with your feet?".

The disciple said, "Maharaj! How am I to put my feet on your holy person? That is a great sin".

The saint replied, "But are you not, in thus disobeying me, putting your feet on my tongue?".

One should learn a lesson from this example. The disciple should not exercise his intellect in carrying out the orders of his Guru. He should discard impertinence and should develop true and lasting devotion to the Guru. One should serve a saint in every way, serve him physically, meditate on him, carry out his orders without delay, try to serve his mission, and so forth. One should have unflinching faith. Mysterious are the ways of a saint. The services that he takes from you are for your own benefit.

He himself wants nothing. By giving various orders and testing you in various ways, he makes you a fit vessel for the reception of enlightenment.

One should not serve a saint for the sake of seeing miracles. You must have spiritual benefit from a saint. One should serve a saint with body, mind and soul together for the sake of attainment of God. Serving a saint for the sake of wife, children, wealth and honour, or for any other selfish motive is a great folly. Though the saint's contact can give you success in all worldly endeavours, yet it is like giving away diamonds in exchange for stones.

A Miscellany of Poems on Satsang & Svadhyaya

THE FRUITS OF DARSHAN OF MAHATMAS

Even a mere Darshan of great saints
Bestows wealth on the devotee,
Destroys all his sins,
Makes "Sreyas" (all that is good) flow towards him,
Gives him name and fame.
The benefits of Satsang are indescribable.
The blessings of sages
Will liberate you from Samsara.

MISS NOT A SATSANG

The sublime thoughts
That never occur to one lecturer
Will occur to another.
You should not miss that.
A sublime thought
May not occur to a lecturer on one day,
But may occur to him on another occasion.
You should not miss that.
Miss not an opportunity
To have Satsang of Mahatmas and saints.

DO NOT JUDGE A SAGE

Only a sage can know a sage.
He will sometimes appear like a Sarvajna, all-knower.
He will sometimes appear like an Ajna, ignorant man.
He knows when to act like a Brahmanishtha
And when to behave like a fool.
Do not judge him.
If you approach him with the proper Bhava,
With faith, devotion and spiritual thirst,
He will impart the highest knowledge to you.
If you approach him with a bad motive,
He will behave like a mad-man
And you will be deceived.
Great will be your loss then.

WHO IS A SADHU?

Many people think that
A Sadhu should take only two breads;
If he takes three or four breads, he is not a Sadhu.
A Sadhu should wear only a small towel;
If he wears a shirt or a coat,
He is not a Sadhu.
What a terrible state of ignorance,
Delusion, foolishness and stupidity!
Judge not a Sadhu by these things.
Renunciation is a mental state,
Sadhuism is an internal growth.

A PSEUDO-SAINT

He keeps matted locks and a long beard,
He carries a Yoga-danda and Kamandalu too,

He utters "Sivoham", "Ram Ram",
He wears a bundle of rosaries.
He keeps a Gita and Ramayana with him,
He sits erect with closed eyes.
He does not take food for days together.
He is a hypocrite, he is a pseudo-saint.
Beware friend, beware comrade.
No saint is he, no trace of God he bears.
He would cut your throat.
He is a scoundrel, he is a rogue.
Dark hell waits him certainly.

PSEUDO-SANNYASI

A pseudo-Sannyasi pollutes
The noble order of Sannyasa
By donning the orange-colour robe.
He is impudent, deceitful,
He is unrestrained,
He walks in disguise,
He is a counterfeit monk,
He is a babbler,
He defiles the way.
Beware, be cautious, friends!

SANGA-DOSHA

Sanga-dosha is defect of evil company.
Aspirants should be very careful.
They should not freely mix with worldlings.
They will have a hopeless downfall.
They will begin to imitate the life of worldlings.
They will take up again
Those articles which they have renounced.

They will come down
To the level of worldlings.
All sorts of worldly Vasanas
Will enter their mind.
Therefore they should remain in seclusion
Till they are nicely moulded
And attain full illumination.

BANEFUL EFFECTS OF EVIL COMPANY

There was a Tapasvin in a forest.
He was doing Tapas for several years,
He had not seen women,
He had not tasted sweetmeats,
He lived on the fruits of forests.
There was a great famine in the country.
Pundits said to the king:
"If the Tapasvin is brought to the Capital,
There will be good rain".
There was great difficulty in bringing him;
But some damsels came forward.
They said "We will bring him anyhow".
They repaired to the forest with musical instruments
And a variety of sweetmeats.
They danced and sang,
They hung sweetmeats in the trees.
The melody penetrated into the ears of the Tapasvin.
He came near the damsels,
He ate the sweetmeats,
He was very much attracted towards the damsels.
The damsels said "O Tapasvin! Come to our town.
We will take care of you".
The Tapasvin agreed.
He came to the Capital.

There was a good downpour of rain.
He was honoured by the king.
Gradually his dispassion waned.
He marked his gradual downfall.
He thought this was due to the Sanga-dosha.
At once he ran to the forest at night,
Without telling anybody.
He again did severe Tapas
And attained his original glorious state.

WHAT CANNOT SCRIPTURES BESTOW ON YOU?

Devout study of Srimad Bhagavata
Bestows Bhakti and Vairagya on you.
Intelligent study of Vishnu-purana
Qualifies you for enquiry into the nature of Truth.
Pious recital of Srimad Ramayana
Confers progeny and prosperity on you.
Faithful study of the Mahabharata
Destroys all your sins and makes you pure.
What cannot Svadhyaya do?

VEDAS, PURANAS, AND KAVYAS

Vedas are like the Master;
They command you to lead the divine life.
They do not use argument or persuasion.
Puranas are like the good friend;
They plead with you to do the right,
Using various arguments and
Illustrating them with interesting stories.
Kavyas are like the devout wife;

They capture your heart
And lure you into the life divine.
Each one has its own place
And is suited to a particular temperament.

Sannyasins and Regeneration of Society

Sadhus and Sannyasins form the pivot of the world order. They are the most proper authorities in maintaining the world peace and harmony. They are the real instruments by which innumerable aggressive nations may be brought into close contact with one another and united together. Real Sadhus and Sannyasins who always aim at universal brotherhood undergo vast experience in all stages of their life. The life of a Sadhu or a Sannyasin is the most perilous one. It is a double-edged sword. Unless life is led in the most righteous and virtuous way, a Sadhu gets lost in the wilderness.

Now-a-days, we may find some persons garb themselves in ochre-coloured dress and roam about the world posing themselves as Sadhus and bringing home ill-fame to the Sannyasi community as a whole. The stipulations levied in the scriptures are completely ignored by these. Their contact with the world results in devastating criticism and scandal of the section as a whole.

To prevent such misdeeds and pretensions, and to make the Sadhus and Sannyasins true and worthy

teachers of mankind and to restore the dignity and prestige of the Sadhu community, it has become quite necessary to bring about cohesive unity between these souls by efficient organization.

Initiation, maintenance, and control of genuine Sadhus and Sannyasins are very essential for the welfare of the whole world.

Conferences, parliaments, meetings, convocations and guilds should not be restricted to the Sadhus and Sannyasins of the Hindu religion alone, but should embrace all priests, Fakirs and monks following Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and all religions of the world. All religions are of the same origin with the same fundamental motto with one and only one background. There need be no distinctions in the leading of practical life of persons who have renounced their worldly attachments and who have dedicated their whole life in finding out the real and eternal Truth and bringing it home to the masses at large.

A perfect organisation of all these Sadhus in all corners of the world will promote the interest of these as well as the world at large. All heads of Mutts, churches, and other religious institutions and organisations should join hands and offer concrete suggestions for the efficient working of the organisation.

ORGANISATION OF SADHUS

This is the need of the hour. Much spiritual good can be done if there is a perfect organisation of Sadhus and Sannyasins. You will have a new era, a new world, a new culture if this is done.

There is a huge cry for this organisation.

Every householder in India talks of this. But how are we to do this? This is the problem. This is the question.

The Sadhu community is a heterogeneous and complex one. There are various cults or sects. There are Vairagis, Kabir Panthis, Dadu Panthis, Gorakhnath sects, Nirmalas, Udasis, Dasanama Sannyasins who are followers of Sri Sankara, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Sannyasins, Niranjana Akhada Sannyasins, Nagas and others.

Rishikesh is a colony for Sadhus and Sannyasins. As this is a wonderful charming place on the bank of the Ganges with spiritual vibrations, Sadhus have selected this place for their Tapascharya and meditation. Ancient Rishis lived here and did their Tapas. Uttarakasi in the Himalayas and Hardwar are other centres where many Sadhus live.

There are two important Kshettars in Rishikesh which distribute free food to the Sadhus. Wherever there is free food, all sorts of people flock and put on the coloured garb of an ascetic. Hence, some sort of social evil crops up and the sanctity of the people slowly gets spoiled. Mischief-mongers dwell in such holy places and carry on their work vigorously.

The heads of the Sadhu sects should have an intense desire for the organisation. Only then the work can be done efficiently. They should melt their individual differences and opinions, sit together, and work whole-heartedly. Organisation of the Sadhus is not an easy task. It is, indeed, a stupendous uphill work. It will take some time before it is perfectly organised.

All the Mandaleswars, all the heads of Mutts and religious institutions, all the reputed Sannyasins

and Sadhus who exercise influence over the public should come forward now to take up this work.

No individual Sannyasin will be able to do this work. Sri Sankara had the help and cooperation of kings. He organised his own military force, the Nagas, to carry out the propaganda. So also, this work demands man-power, money-power, police-force, and an army of volunteers.

Many undesirable wicked persons with brutal force live now amidst Sannyasins, wearing the orange-coloured robe. They must be removed ruthlessly. They create a lot of mischief. The organisers will meet with severe opposition from these people. They must be prepared to meet such opposition. Mere lecturing and fiery speeches will not help in the organisation of Sadhus. We want robust, untiring, intellectual, selfless workers. We want also help from generous-hearted, nice people. Then the work will have a successful termination.

It is high time now. This work must be taken up at once. All religious heads must cooperate now. Only then Lokasangraha can be done very efficiently. Only then will there be a real spiritual upheaval in this world.

O Devas! Nitya Siddhas! Will you please enter into the hearts of these religious heads, inspire and goad them to do this?

SANNYASINS' NOBLE MISSION

Sadhus and Sannyasins, as a body, have a universal purpose for which they exist. They are the custodians of the spirituality of the land and have a definite part to play in the advancement and ele-

vation of humanity. To equip themselves for the noble task entrusted to their care, the monks and Sadhus of the world isolate themselves in the beginning from the rest of mankind as a necessary discipline. But unfortunately, we have allowed this separation to become a permanent condition and thus, to a great extent, the Sadhu community has come to regard itself as a unit outside the pale of the rest of humanity struggling valiantly in the plain and in the cities.

Losing touch with others has consequently made the Sadhus forget the part they have to play and neglect their work as educators and enlighteners of the other three orders. We Sannyasins have once again to bestir ourselves and commence playing our destined part in the nation's life. We are to be one united body dedicated to the noble ideal of exerting ourselves unselfishly and whole-heartedly for the ushering in of the new era of brotherhood and peace that must follow after the years of savage strife and bloodshed in which the world is now plunged.

Every section of humanity will play its part in the reconstruction of the new world on a worthier basis. If the new civilisation is to be an enduring one and not merely a prelude to a bigger war, it has to be based on lasting values of a spiritual nature. The providing of this fundamental spiritual basis to the new humanity is the work of the Sadhus, Sannyasins, and monks of the world.

The onus of spiritualising the coming generation rests upon the shoulders of the men of Spirit, the saints, Sadhus and Mahatmas. They should do this without fail to keep the glorious tradition of this land and to maintain their respected place as

a useful unit of society.

The lay people always look up to the Sadhus for active guidance in matters of moral and spiritual import. We have, therefore, to set to work by precept, actual example, and active life-work. In bringing together the saints of the country into a united and harmonious association, let all join with enthusiasm and help in every way to make it a thorough success. In view of the great work that lies before us all, the Sadhus of the holy places in India, let us start with earnestness and faith in the Almighty.

Such a Sangathan is to be a preliminary and a preparatory step for the grander union of all the saints and Mahatmas of the world for the noble work of Lokasangraha in the post-war world. India is to be made the glorious Bharatavarsha of King Bharata once again and she will be the Spiritual Mother of the world not in theory, but actually in fact. The instrument to achieve this divine work is this selfless union.

To make itself qualified, fit, and ready for the task is the initial work of this organisation. To this end, the first measure will be to take stock of the united strength of the Sangh. Even as was done on the eve of the Mahabharata Yuddha, this will provide an idea of our capacities. For, verily, we represent the force of Sattva and good for overcoming the force of Tamas and evil that has the world in its grip today.

SANNYASINS AND SOCIAL WELFARE

A Sadhu or Sannyasin should be invited to stay in every college hostel. Daily he should give easy lessons to the students on ethical and spiritual cul-

ture, and also practical training in meditation and worship. He should teach them the Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavata, Ramayana and Upanishads. Only then they will be properly moulded and they will possess good character. The condition of the boys is deplorable at the present moment. They have lost faith in God and in the holy scriptures. They have become irreligious. It is for the heads of committees that run the educational institutions to give a chance to the younger generation to evolve spiritually by coming in direct contact with the Sannyasins, by maintaining such spiritual Sannyasin-instructors.

A Sadhu or Sannyasin should be asked to visit the Government jails at least once a week. He should conduct prayers and Kirtan among the prisoners and make them good souls through moral instructions. People commit crimes or thefts mainly through ignorance. If ignorance is removed through proper training or Vidya, there will be neither criminals nor jails. We shall surely have a heaven on earth. Will the Discharged Prisoners Associations or similar societies look to this?

If a Sannyasin lives in a town where there is a hospital, he should be given the opportunity to visit the patients daily and cheer them up. He should offer prayers for their rapid recovery, and conduct prayers, Kirtan and common meditation amongst them. He should speak to them about the immortal and diseaseless nature of the Soul that lies within their bodies.

Much spiritual uplift which is the dire need of the day can be done, if the above suggestions are put into effect. The band of educated Sannyasins

who are prepared to do selfless work in the world will not be wanting to come out from their retreats into the busy world. The world has only to recognise the importance of such a noble band in the welfare of the society.

Select Sayings on Satsang

WHAT IS SATSANG?

1. To get oneself established in Brahman is real Satsang. Company of the wise is also Satsang. Study of religious books written by the realised souls is also Satsang. Satsang or association with the wise removes the darkness of the heart, leads you to the right path and causes the sun of wisdom to shine in your heart.

2. Satsang is association with the wise. Live in the company of sages, saints, Sadhus, Yogis and Sannyasins; hear their valuable Upadesha or instructions and follow them implicitly. This is Satsang.

GOD AND THE SAINT

3. God is the great purifier. A saint also is a great purifier.

4. God incarnates as saints and sages when their need is felt most.

5. God works through sages and saints.

6. God reveals Himself in a saint in His full glory, infinite power, wisdom and bliss.

7. The saints are the heart of the Lord and the Lord is the heart of the saint.

8. It is extremely difficult to come in contact with a saint and to be benefited by his company. It is through divine grace only one will get his Darshan and Satsang.

9. Divine grace works through saints.

THE GLORY OF SAINTS

10. Saints are the living symbols of religion and are the true benefactors of humanity.

11. The sage or saint or Yogi is a magnet. He is a centre of power and wisdom.

12. A sage is a sustainer of the world. He is a source of perpetual inspiration. He is an instrument through which divine grace is transmitted to the unregenerated men.

13. A sage is the salt which preserves the society from decay and degeneration.

14. A saint is a beacon-light in the stormy sea of this Samsara. He prevents many ship-wrecks in the lives of many human beings.

15. A realised sage or saint is a fountain of delight, joy and illumination. Seek his company and evolve. Serve him with faith and devotion.

16. A sage is a fountain of spiritual wisdom. Approach him with all humility and reverence. He will impart to you divine wisdom.

17. Learn wisdom from saints. They are your saviours. Know them to be saints who possess godly qualities.

THE BENEFITS OF SATSANG

18. Satsang with Mahatmas, Sadhus and the Guru plays a tremendous part in the attainment of

quick spiritual progress.

19. Satsang is the easiest and quickest means to change the minds of worldly persons towards the spiritual path and to thoroughly overhaul the vicious, wrong Samskaras.

20. Satsang elevates the mind and fills it with Sattva or purity. It eradicates the vicious thoughts in the mind and leads to the attainment of wisdom or Brahma-jnana.

21. Without Satsang, this mind which is filled with worldly impurities cannot be turned towards God.

22. Satsang with sages is the surest Viveka-inspiring agent. Vairagya or dispassion cannot be attained without Satsang.

23. Satsang removes the darkness of ignorance and fills your mind with Vairagya or non-attachment or dispassion for worldly enjoyments. Satsang is the sun that dispels the cloud of ignorance. It forces you to lead the life divine and have strong conviction in the existence of God.

24. The company of a saint remarkably hastens the growth of Sattvic virtues in the aspirant, and gives him strength to awaken the dormant powers, and to eradicate undesirable negative qualities and various defects.

25. Satsang helps a great deal in the attainment of Moksha. There is no other way. It removes and destroys the three-fold afflictions. It is an unfailing means to conquer Maya and this dire mind.

26. Satsang is a formidable and impregnable fortress to protect the young aspirants from the temptations and the attacks of Maya.

27. Just as a boat is the greatest shelter to a drowning man, so also, a saint or a sage is the only shelter to the persons who are being drowned in the ocean of worldliness.

28. Satsang is a sentinel at the door of Moksha. If you make friendship with him, he will introduce you to his other friends, viz., Vichara (enquiry), Shanti (peace), and Santosha (contentment) and you will attain Self-realisation quickly and easily.

29. Satsang is unfailing in its results.

30. Satsang or association with the wise is the one panacea for all the ills of life.

31. There is nothing so inspiring, elevating, solacing and delightful as Satsang.

32. Satsang is the greatest of all purifiers and illuminators of man.

33. Satsang with a sage even for a minute is much better than rulership of a kingdom.

34. Have the company of saints who will heal your sores, infuse new life into you, rejuvenate you, and show you the way to peace and happiness.

35. Follow the teachings of saints and sages, the perfected beings, the seers of Truth. Attune yourself with their Spirit.

36. Life, fame, happiness, power and knowledge will increase in that man who respects elders and saints, and with faith and devotion prostrates before them.

HOW HOLY COMPANY TRANSFORMS

37. The human mind is a very receptive instrument. If you place it in evil company, it will acquire evil tendencies. If you place it in holy company, it will acquire divine traits.

38. Bright ideals infuse an urge to grow into their likeness. Evil examples also have a similar effect if the mind is not guarded.

39. If you go to a sage, there will automatically come a feeling of purity and peace within you.

40. Just as cold, fear and darkness depart from one who approaches fire, so does weakness, worldliness and ignorance depart from him who keeps himself near to the saints.

41. Saints at once purify those who go near them, whereas Ganges purges the sins of only those whom its water comes in contact with in ablution.

42. Saints cleanse the sinners at once at the very sight of them.

43. The sight of a sage is delightful. To live with him is always peaceful. To converse with him is blissful.

44. The moment the mind thinks of a sage, immediately all evil desires, base passions are brushed aside.

45. At the time of thinking of saintly personages, the mind gets moulded into the shape of the qualities of which it thinks, and thereby becomes pure.

46. Meditation on the lives of saints is equal to holy company. Study of their teachings is equal to holy company.

47. To think of the lives of saints, to live in their company, to have the good fortune of receiving their blessings, is to draw forth upon yourselves a shower of purity, inspiration and divine consciousness.

48. The very company of sages and saints has

a tremendous transforming effect on the lives of true seekers. It lifts them up to the heights of sublimity, purity, and spirituality. It does not fail to affect even the rank materialists.

49. By association with saints even for a short time, the aspirants acquire strong faith in the Lord.

50. The sage is very silent. He speaks a few words. These words produce a tremendous impression. They give a new life and joy to all who understand him and his message. In his presence alone all the doubts of the aspirants are cleared, though he remains mute.

51. The company of saints generates love for God. The love for God brings salvation.

52. One moment of company with the holy builds a ship to cross this ocean of life.

HOW TO BENEFIT FROM THE COMPANY OF SAINTS

53. Jivanmuktas or the liberated sages are ever ready to help those who are still climbing to reach the peak of wisdom. This is their work in this world. It is the duty of the aspirants to seek their aid and have a receptive attitude.

54. To benefit from the company of saints, you have to prepare yourself first. Do not go with any preconceived notion or prejudice. Go with an open, receptive mind. Go without expectations. Approach them humbly, respectfully. Assimilate what appeals to you. If some of their teachings do not appeal to you, do not form a hasty opinion. If you do not like them, you need not take them to heart. What may

be suitable to another may not be suitable to you. Yet, with regard to broad fundamentals, there can be no difference of opinion.

55. One should possess the right desire to cross the ocean of Samsara and to attain Knowledge of Brahman through Satsang.

56. When you go before a sage, do not ask him questions out of mere inquisitiveness. Sit in his presence humbly. Observe him. Listen to him without prejudice. Ask him only such questions about which you really need clarification.

57. Ask him only pertinent questions. Do not draw him into politics or public bickerings.

58. Meditate in the presence of a sage. You will get inner light which will clear your doubts.

59. An intelligent man only will understand and realise the Truth in the company of a sage.

SERVICE OF SAINTS

60. The easy way to reach God is to live in the company of saints and practise their teaching.

61. The words of a sage enliven the heart and clear the doubts of ignorance. Try to profit as much as you can by their instructions.

62. Without the grace of saints, you cannot know the secrets of divine life. You can acquire their grace by sincere practice of their precepts as well as by doing personal service to them.

63. Service to the saints is the door to Moksha.

64. It is very difficult to attain the good fortune of serving the saints.

65. Association with saints comes when the seeker is nearing his salvation.

66. The Lord is enthroned in the heart of a man who has unselfish devotion to saints.

THE LIVES OF SAINTS

67. Lives of saints are the compass-needles on your voyage to Moksha.

68. A book which treats of the lives of saints is a constant companion and priceless treasure for you.

69. Constant study of the lives of saints will enable you to lead a saintly life. You will imbibe their noble qualities.

70. You will be gradually moulded in the spiritual path. You will draw inspiration from them.

71. There will be an inner urge in you to attempt for God-realisation.

72. Remember the great saints and sages. You will be inspired. They are not dead. They are more alive today than ever before.

73. Beware of bad company; even a sober man begins to drink in the company of a drunkard.

74. Anything that brings impure thoughts in the mind is bad company.

75. Evil company is very dangerous. It leads to the rousing up of passion, anger, hatred, delusion, loss of memory, and loss of discrimination. Therefore, shun evil company ruthlessly.

76. The company of men who associate with women is the door leading to worldly bondage.

The Hindu Scriptures on the Glory of Satsanga

THE YOGA-VASISHTHA

Sage Vasishtha says to Sri Rama:

"Satsanga serves as a boat to cross this terrible ocean of Samsara. The company of sages even for a moment is highly beneficial. Even the Darshan of Mahatmas destroys sins and elevates the mind. The company of virtuous people produces the fresh blossom of discrimination. The company of sages wards off all disasters and destroys the tree of ignorance. Sages prescribe the best rules of conduct for aspirants and teach them the correct mode of life. The company of the virtuous sheds light on the right path and destroys the internal darkness of man. The company of sages is the unfailing means to conquer Maya and this dire mind.

"Contentment, Satsanga, enquiry and Shanti are the four-fold means of attaining Self-realisation. Those who are in possession of these four-fold means have crossed the ocean of Samsara. 'Contentment' is regarded as the best gain, 'good company' as the right cause, 'enquiry' as the true knowledge, and

'Shanti' as the highest bliss of man. All prosperity and success attend on him who is possessed of these four-fold means. As soon as one of these virtues is developed, it will serve to weaken the force of the faults of your uncontrollable mind. The cultivation of virtues leads to the suppression and eradication of vices; but the fostering of vice will, on the contrary, conduce to the increase of vices and suppression of virtuous qualities. The mind is a wilderness of errors in which the stream of our desires is running with a tremendous force amidst its two banks of good and evil.

"Therefore, O Rama, control your mind bravely and develop diligently the above four-fold means for your conduct in life.

"He who practises regularly Atmic enquiry will never be afflicted by the pains and miseries of Samsara. He will have always equanimity of mind and equal vision. He will be ever peaceful and joyful. Maya will never approach him. He will ever engage himself in meditation on the Imperishable and Self-luminous Atma.

"One should study books on Atma-jnana, keep company with the sages, develop the four-fold means and right conduct, control the senses, and ever engage himself in the practice of Atmic enquiry till Knowledge of the Self dawns in him".

SRIMAD BHAGAVATA

Lord Krishna says to Uddhava:

"I am not so easily attainable by Yoga, Sankhya or discrimination, Dharma, study of the Vedas, Tapas, renunciation, liberal gifts, charitable acts, rites

such as Aghnihotra, fasts, vows, Yajnas, secret Mantras, resort to pilgrimages, Yamas and Niyamas, as by Satsang which puts an end to all attachments.

"It is only by association with the wise and the righteous, that many who were of a Rajasic or Tamasic nature—such as Vritra, son of the sage Twashtri, Prahlada, the Daityas, the Asuras and the Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Nagas, Siddhas, Charanas, Guhyakas and Vidyadharas, many beasts and birds, and among mankind Vaisyas, Sudras, women and outcastes who are of the lowest birth, have attained Me.

"Vaishaparva, Bali, Bana, Maya, Vibhishana, Sugriva, Hanuman, Jambavan the bear, Gajendra the elephant, Jatayu the vulture, Tuladhara the merchant, Dharmavyadha the fowler, Kubja the hunchbacked perfume-seller, the Gopis in Vraja, the wives of the Brahmanas engaged in sacrifices in Brindavan, and others—all these did not study the Vedas, did not sit at the feet of great men of learning for the sake of knowledge; they did not observe any vows or fasts; they did not perform Tapas; but they attained Me through the association with saints and Sadhus.

"Through love alone, developed through the company of saints, the Gopis, and even the cows, trees, beasts, serpents, and others of dull-witted nature, became perfected and easily attained Me whom one does not attain by making great endeavours through Yoga or Sankhya, charity, vows, Tapas, sacrifices, teaching and study of the Vedas, or renunciation. When I was taken by Akrura to Mathura with Balarama, the Gopis, with their hearts given to Me

through intense devotion, were greatly afflicted at heart on account of My separation. Nothing but Me could give them any delight or interest. For the Gopis, those very nights which they spent like a moment with Me, their most beloved one, while at Vrindavan, became in my absence, like Yugas. With their hearts and minds fixed on Me, through intense love and attachment, they were not conscious of their bodies or their relatives or what was near or at a distance, just as sages do not know names and forms in the state of Samadhi or superconscious condition, like the rivers merged in the waters of the ocean.

"The ignorant Gopis, who were not aware of My real nature as Supreme Brahman, took Me as their beloved paramour and yet they attained Me, the Supreme Brahman, by hundreds and thousands, through the power of Satsang or holy association. Therefore, O Uddhava, abandon injunctions and prohibitions, the course of Pravritta Karma and Nivritta Karma, what is yet to be studied or what is already studied; rise above the rules and counter-rules. Care not for Srutis or Smritis, for biddings and forbiddings; take refuge in Me alone wholeheartedly and with all devotion—the Atma of all beings. Thou shalt have no fear from any quarter, from any cause or causes".

Darshan Yoga or Holy Darshan of Living Mahatmas

1. H.H. Swami Krishna Ashram (Jnani), Gangotri.
2. ,, Swami Adwaitanandji Maharaj (Jnani), Gujerat.
3. ,, Swami Svayam Jyoti Maharaj (Jnani), Parivrajak, Broach.
4. ,, Swami Vishnudevanandaji Maharaj (Jnani), Kailas Ashram, Rishikesh.
5. ,, Shree Shree Ma Anandamayee, Varanasi.
6. ,, Sri Bala Yogi, Mummidivaram, Amalapuram Taluq, near Rajahmundry, Andhra Pradesh.
7. ,, Sri Prabhu Datt Brahmachariji Maharaj, Allahabad.
8. ,, Sri Hari Baba, Brindavan.
9. ,, Sri Avadhoot Ramanandaji Maharaj, Uttarakasi.
10. ,, Swami Brahm Perkashji Maharaj (Vedantin), Rishikesh.
11. ,, Swami Omkar, President and Founder, Santi Ashram, Via Peddapuram, East

Godavari, Andhra Pradesh.

12. " Swami Kuvalayanandji Maharaj (Yogi), Founder, Lonavla Ashram, Lonavla, Bombay.

13. " Sri T.L. Vaswani (alias Dadaji), Poona.

14. " Krishna Premi Vairagi (alias Mr. Nixon), Uttara Brindavan, Pannanwala, Almora.

15. " Sankaracharya Peetadipathis of Sringeri, Dwaraka, Puri, Kumbakonam, Joshi Mutt, etc.

I owe an apology to these Mahatmas for inserting their names in this book without obtaining their permission. I hope they will excuse me. My one idea is that the thirsty aspirants after Truth will be highly inspired by the mere reading of the names of Mahatmas. Sound has tremendous power on the mind. The body goes away soon, but the name lives for a long time. An occasional Darshan of a Mahatma, a glimpse of his face filled with peace and *Brahmic Glow,* will undoubtedly inspire the spiritually hungry *Mumukshus*. A man's career takes an entire change at the simple sight of a Mahatma. Mahatmas should not be miserly in giving their *Darshan* to thirsty, dispassionate aspirants.

Sarva Deva Rishi Bhakta Kirtan Mala

THARS OR METTU:

Bhajo Radhe Krishna, Bhajo Radhe Shyama
Bhajo Radhe Krishna, Bhajo Radhe Shyama

UNIVERSAL KIRTAN

1. Bhajo Lord Jesus, Bhajo Lord Mohammed
   Bhajo Khuda Khuda, Bhajo Allah Allah
2. Bhajo Lord Buddha, Bhajo Tatagatha
   Bhajo Arhat, Bhajo Bodhisattva
3. Bhajo Lord Confucius, Bhajo Lord Shinto
   Bhajo Lord Mahabir, Bhajo Lord Tirthankaras
4. Bhajo Vahiguru, Bhajo Nanakadeva
   Bhajo Guru Arjun, Bhajo Guru Govinda
5. Bhajo Saint Joseph, Bhajo Saint Francis
   Bhajo Saint Mathews, Bhajo Saint Patrick
6. Bhajo Mansoor, Bhajo Shams Tabriez
   (Bhajo Zoroaster)

ANCIENT RISHIS

1. Bhajo Nara Rishi, Bhajo Narayana Rishi
   Bhajo Padmabhava, Bhajo Vasishtha Muni

2. Bhajo Sakti Parasara, Bhajo Vyasa Bhagavan
Bhajo Suka Brahmarishi, Bhajo Govinda Pada
3. Bhajo Sankaracharya, Bhajo Padmapada
Bhajo Hastamalaka, Bhajo Trotakacharya
Bhajo Sureswaracharya, Bhajo Sadguru Deva
4. Bhajo Atri Bhrigu, Bhajo Utsa Vasishtha
Bhajo Gautama Kasyapa, Bhajo Durvasa Angiras
5. Bhajo Sanaka Sanandana, Bhajo Sanatkumara
Bhajo Sanatsujata, Bhajo Ashtavakra
6. Bhajo Yajnavalkya, Bhajo Uddalaka
Bhajo **Agastya.** Bhajo Visvamitra
7. Bhajo Kapila Muni, Bhajo Patanjali Rishi
Bhajo Valmiki Rishi, Bhajo Lord Manu
Bhajo Rishi Kanada, Bhajo Rishi Jaimini
8. Bhajo Prajapathi, Bhajo Bharadwaja
Bhajo Lord Yama, Bhajo Nachiketas

SAINTS OF THE PAST

1. Bhajo Sankaracharya, Bhajo Ramanujacharya
Bhajo Madhwacharya, Bhajo Vallabhacharya
Bhajo Nimbarkacharya, Bhajo Gorakanatha
2. Bhajo Sadasiva Brahman, Bhajo Vidyaranya
Bhajo Madhusudanswami, Bhajo Sreedhara Swami
3. Bhajo Gourang Mahaprabh u,Bhajo Ramaprasad
Bhajo Ramananda, Bhajo Samartha Ramdas
4. Bhajo Thayumanavar, Bhajo Pattinathar
Bhajo Appar Sundarar, Bhajo Manickavachakar
5. Bhajo Tiruvalluvar, Bhajo Sundaramurti
Bhajo Gyanasambhandar, Bhajo Kannappa Nayanar
6. Bhajo Tyagaraja, Bhajo Purandaradasa
Bhajo Vemanna, Bhajo Potana
7. Bhajo Ramalingaswami, Bhajo Dhanna Bhagat
Bhajo Totapuri, Bhajo Ramakrishna

8. Bhajo Vivekananda, Bhajo Rama Tirtha
Bhajo Sai Baba, Bhajo Upasani Baba
9. Bhajo Gorakumbar, Bhajo Sena Nayi
Bhajo Chokamela, Bhajo Ravi Dasa
10. Bhajo Kanakadasa, Bhajo Nivrittinath
Bhajo Gyanadeva, Bhajo Sopanadeva
11. Bhajo Muktabai, Bhajo Ekanatha
Bhajo Namadeva, Bhajo Tukaram
12. Bhajo Raghunatha Rai, Bhajo Mukunda Rai
Bhajo Trilingaswami, Bhajo Pavahari Baba
13. Bhajo Kalikambliwala, Bhajo Vijayadas
Bhajo Tulsidas, Bhajo Kabirdas
Bhajo Damaji, Bhajo Surdas
14. Bhajo Narasi Mehta, Bhajo Dadukavi
Bhajo Nandanar, Bhajo Potana

BHAKTAS

1. Bhajo Prahalad, Bhajo Narada Rishi
Bhajo Parasara, Bhajo Pundarika
2. Bhajo Vyasa Bhagavan, Bhajo Ambarisha
Bhajo Suka Muni, Bhajo Saunaka
3. Bhajo Bhishma Pitamaha, Bhajo Rugmangada
Bhajo Vibhishana, Bhajo Hanuman
4. Bhajo Lakshmana, Bhajo Bharata
Bhajo Satrugna, Bhajo Jatayu
5. Bhajo Gouranga, Bhajo Dhruva
6. Bhajo Chaitanya Deva, Bhajo Nityananda
Bhajo Dhruva Uddhava, Bhajo Akrura Sudama

CHIRANJIVIS

1. Bhajo Aswathama, Bhajo Kaka Bhusandi
Bhajo Markandeya, Bhajo King Bali
2. Bhajo Vyasa Bhagavan, Bhajo Narada Rishi
Bhajo Hanuman, Bhajo Jambavan

HISTORICAL PERSONAGES

1. Bhajo Raja Janaka, Bhajo Harischandra
   Bhajo Raja Yudhishthira, Bhajo Raja Gopichand
2. Bhajo Raja Bhartrihari, Bhajo Sikhidhwaja
   Bhajo Raja Bharata, Bhajo Raja Nala
3. Bhajo Raja Arjuna, Bhajo Nakula Sahadeva
   Bhajo Karna Sibi, Bhajo Dadhichi
4. Bhajo Vidura, Bhajo Kalidasa
   Bhajo Sivaji, Bhajo Asoka

LADY SAINTS AND DEVOTEES

1. Bhajo Kausalya Devi, Bhajo Devaki Devi
   Bhajo Yasoda Mata, Bhajo Devahuti
2. Bhajo Savitri, Bhajo Nalayini
   Bhajo Ahalya, Bhajo Anasuya
3. Bhajo Sabari, Bhajo Draupadi
   Bhajo Satyabhama, Bhajo Madalasa
4. Bhajo Chudalai Rani, Bhajo Sulabha Devi
   Bhajo Maitreyi, Bhajo Arundhati
5. Bhajo Mukta Bai, Bhajo Sakkubai
   Bhajo Mira Bai, Bhajo Maitrayani
   Bhajo Kunti Tara, Bhajo Mandodari
   Bhajo Andal, Bhajo Avvayar

HINDU GODS

1. Bhajo Vishnu Bhagavan, Bhajo Padmanabha
   Bhajo Prajapati, Bhajo Lord Siva
2. Bhajo Lord Krishna, Bhajo Lord Rama
   Bhajo Lord Ganesha, Bhajo Kartikeya
3. Bhajo Lord Hari, Bhajo Matsya Rupa
   Bhajo Kurma Rupa, Bhajo Varaha Rupa
4. Bhajo Narasimhamurti, Bhajo Lord Vamana

Bhajo Parasurama, Bhajo Balarama

5. Bhajo Kalki Avatar, Bhajo Dattatreya

Bhajo Dakshinamurti, Bhajo Hariharaputra

Bhajo Dwarakadhisa, Bhajo Pandarinatha

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1. Bhajo Virat Purusha, Bhajo Hiranyagarbha

Bhajo Isa Mahesa, Bhajo Antariksha

2. Bhajo Brihaspati, Bhajo Aryama

Bhajo Vayu Bhagavan, Bhajo Trisanku

3. Bhajo Indra Vahni, Bhajo Pithripati

Bhajo Nirriti, Bhajo Varuna Yama

4. Bhajo Kubera Isa, Bhajo Mitra Deva

Bhajo Vidhyadharas, Bhajo Yaksha Kinnaras

5. Bhajo Gandharvas, Bhajo Siddhacharanas

Bhajo Guhyakas, Bhajo Vinayakas

6. Bhajo Ashtavasu, Bhajo Navagriha

Bhajo Rahu Ketu, Bhajo Surya Soma

Bhajo Kuja Budha, Bhajo Brihaspati

Bhajo Sukracharya, Bhajo Sanischara.

HINDU GODDESSES

1. Bhajo Lakshmi Devi, Bhajo Vani Saraswati

Bhajo Parvati, Bhajo Uma Gauri

Bhajo Gayatri Devi, Bhajo Sandhya Devata

2. Bhajo Dakshayani, Bhajo Durga Devi

Bhajo Chandi Chamundi, Bhajo Mahishasuramardhani

3. Bhajo Kali Mata, Bhajo Valli Daivanai

Bhajo Sita Janaki, Bhajo Radha Rukmini

4. Bhajo Gangarani, Bhajo Kanji Kamakshi

Bhajo Kasi Visalakshi, Bhajo Madurai Meenakshi

5. Bhajo Katyayani, Bhajo Mahamaya

Bhajo Jagadambika, Bhajo Annapurni

(Bhajo Bhumidevi)

The Importance of Satsanga and Guru-bhakti

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Why Svadhyaya?

BY SWAMI CHIDANANDA

The Importance of Satsanga and Guru-bhakti

The two subjects, Satsanga and Guru-bhakti, are inter-connected, for in a way, the devotion to the spiritual Preceptor is a specialised form of Satsang. It is a specialised and intense form of Satsang.

SATSANG WITH A MAHATMA AND SATSANG WITH THE GURU

Satsang is company of the holy; it is the company of any saint, any holy man, any Mahatma, any devotee. Satsang, in this general sense, may be momentary. For instance, Yatris come, people come on leave to sacred places, and then they take the opportunity of their presence in a holy place to meet the holy persons in that place and have the benefit of their Satsang. So, such kind of Satsang is momentary in character. But, when the seeker approaches a saint for Satsang, and later on he establishes a permanent relationship with that saint and begins to regard that saint as his spiritual guide, as his Guru, then this Satsang assumes a special aspect. It becomes permanent, and in addition to

regarding and reverencing that person as a holy man, as a man of God, the devotee has special reverence for him amounting to worship and adoration. And especially in India, it amounts to worship which is given to God Himself, because deification of the Guru is a deeply significant aspect of the mysterious relationship between the seeker and the perfected saint through whom he is trying to attain Salvation. So when this relationship is established with a saint, then you do that Satsang with intense devotion, absolute surrender and an overwhelming spirit of dedication. You try to nullify your personality.

ONLY THE RECEPTIVE CAN BENEFIT BY SATSANG

Of course, this has to be done when you approach *any* saint. If you approach a saint and if you have to benefit by him, if you have to attain something or gain something, you have to put yourself in the position of a receiver. Even in the world of Vyavahar, let us suppose you wish to know something from a highly learned person. Supposing you go to him saying, 'I know everything'; then naturally you will have no ears to whatever that man may have to say, and therefore, even if you go to the highest scholar, the most learned man, you will come back with the same old ideas which you had with you. You would be the same man. You would not have gained even a grain of the knowledge that he possessed, because you have never had the feeling of inadequacy that 'there is some void in me; let me go; he possesses that'. Until and unless this feeling is there in a man who approaches, he cannot be a re-

ceiver, and even though the other person is there to give in the spirit of the giver, the man who went comes back empty-handed, because he has not fulfilled the conditions of a receiver. It is so when you approach any person, and it is all the more so when you approach a saint and try to take him as your Guru. Therefore, Satsang with a saint becomes discipleship when the saint becomes the Guru; and you sit at the feet of the Guru in a special sense, as a disciple.

THE BASIS OF GURU-DISCIPLE RELATIONSHIP

Now what is the basis of this Guru-disciple relationship which is held in such great importance in the Hindu spiritual world? I give for you to remember three words, which if you keep in mind, you can get some glimpse of the spiritual psychology which is behind this important feature of the spiritual life. The first word is 'Upanishad', the second word is 'Upasana', and the third word is 'Satsang'.

How do you derive the word 'Upanishad'? It means 'sitting near a person' who is illumined, so that we may receive from him the knowledge which illumines him. So it means sitting near a perfect master, a seer of wisdom, and trying humbly to draw that knowledge from him. It is knowledge revealed through sages at whose feet the seekers sat with devotion, receptivity and humility and thus became receivers of that knowledge. That is the content of the Upanishads, that which is got by sitting near a seer and learning from him.

'Upasana' means, more or less, the same thing. Whereas 'Upanishad' is the word which gives us the

secret clue to the method of getting knowledge, to the technique of attaining wisdom, similarly, devotion to the Lord, worship of the Lord is described by the term 'Upasana'. 'Upasana' means worship or adoration of the Lord and it means literally in Sanskrit, 'having your seat close by'. It means 'sitting near', 'sitting beside the Deity'. This shows the necessity of establishing a close contact with the supreme object of worship through which you wish to derive enlightenment.

'Satsang' also similarly brings out more or less identical sense. It means 'being in companionship with Truth', and similarly, 'being in companionship with those who have attuned their consciousness to the absolute Ultimate Reality, who have made themselves of the form of the Supreme Truth'. *Brahmavit Brahmaiva Bhavati*. A man who realises the ultimate Truth, becomes himself an embodiment of Truth, the visible expression of Truth; and therefore, saints and sages, men of Realisation, are the very embodiments, the very visible expressions in manifestation, of the Truth upon which their consciousness is for ever based. So when you have Satsang, it means you sit in close companionship with Truth or with the supreme embodiment of Truth which the saint is.

These three things—Upanishads, Upasana and Satsang—have ever been the very sheet-anchor of our spiritual life. At the highest pinnacle, at the very fountain-source of our spiritual culture, we have the Upanishads. In the realm of devotion, we have Upasana. And Satsang is a special form which this technique has assumed in this age, in Kali Yuga. They said, "The greatest thing in Kali Yuga and the

only effective method of crossing this ocean of Samsar, this sea of delusion, is Satsang". It is the boat that takes the soul across the sea of this phenomenal existence, and therefore great importance has been given to Satsang, especially in this Kali Yuga. They say, Nam and Satsang are the two factors upon which the hope of mankind rests. The hope of the seeker, the mainstay of the aspirant's spiritual life, hangs upon these twin factors of Nam and Satsang in this iron age. So, starting with the Upanishad, and later on coming to Upasana, this supreme technique exists in the field of Samsaric life in the form of Satsang. It is of paramount importance to the aspirants in their journey towards the Ultimate Reality.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT APPROACH

Now then, if Satsang is the supreme factor in the unfoldment of one's spiritual consciousness, why is it that each and every aspirant that comes to a Guru does not receive the same illumination and the same mark of illumination, the same fruition of his Sadhana upon the path of Yoga? Lord Krishna lived and had his wonderful divine life in Dwapara Yuga, and He was the visible manifestation of the Supreme Lord, and among the people who constantly moved with Him, who had His company, who spoke to Him and had dealings with Him, there were some who had the intimate knowledge of His Divine nature and became blessed, and there were some who remained unchanged and they perished in the great war which was Lord Krishna's own making. What is this wonderful thing? It is, in one word, the *approach*. The

approach of the Jiva, the approach of the individual soul, is the factor that decides whether the Satsang of a seeker becomes fulfilled in realisation or fruitless in its barrenness. For, when the Kauravas approached Krishna, their approach was one of Dosha-drishti. They were blind to all the good that was in the Lord and their entire vision was focussed upon the seeming, apparent defects. The Lord moves with His Yoga-Maya and Yoga-Maya is the mysterious indefinable Prakriti. If our attention is focussed upon Prakriti, then the light of the Atman is lost upon us. Christ came with his wonderful life, and there were a handful who realised his goodness, and they have become immortal; and lost in oblivion are the countless people who were instrumental in crucifying Him. They saw in him a political agitator, a man who had black-magic, a man in league with the devil. That was the view of the vast multitude of people, and therefore, for them the Satsang of Christ was not there, it was non-existent. Even so, it is the mode of approach of the soul that decides the benefit that he can derive from the Satsang, and we have the classical example of the mode of approach of Duryodhana. In one instance in the Mahabharata, the great Vyasa reveals the anatomy of Duryodhana's personality and, at the same time, the anatomy of Yudhishtira's personality.

THE CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF YUDHISHTIRA AND DURYODHANA

Krishna sends both these people upon a mission. The mission that He gives to Yudhishtira is, "You try to go and get a man totally bad, completely de-

void of any virtue, completely full of vices"; and He calls aside Duryodhana and says, "You try to get a person who is full of virtues, devoid of any defect". Both of them go on their mission, and after a period of time, they both come back to Krishna and approach Him separately. And with each, Krishna makes this enquiry: "Have you come back? Have you brought the man? Where is the man you went out after?". Look at the replies. Duryodhana says, "I have tried my best to find a man full of virtues and devoid of defects, but try as much as I could—I have gone everywhere—I could not find a man who was without defect. Everyone is full of defects. If he has one virtue, he has a dozen evils. And after making a thorough search, I find that the man without the least defect is no other than myself. I am the man, and therefore I have come to you, and therefore do what you want with me". Krishna smiles and says, "This is very good. I am really glad to see a man with all virtues and no vice".

Yudhishtira comes and Krishna asks, "Where is your man?". Yudhishtira answers. . . .his answer has become immortal; it shows the man. He says, "O Lord, even in the worst felon, even in the man whom the world calls the worst, I find qualities which are worthy of being emulated, I find traits which are good, and therefore, try as much as I could, I could not find any person who was full of defects. Each one has got some good point. It is impossible to find a man full of defects, and I analysed myself and I find that I am so full of defects, imperfections and vices that I cannot find a more suitable man to present to you. I am the only person who can fulfil the descrip-

tion you have given me. So I have presented myself before you".

USE AND MISUSE OF THE FAULT-FINDING FACULTY

These are the two methods of approach. Yudhishtira's approach was the approach of the aspirant in whom the fault-finding nature is directed not outside, but within himself. Fault-finding is the worst canker that dwells in human nature. It is universal. But then, the seekers form a special class by themselves. They are not one among the many. They are a distinct fraternity who have begun to see the importance of correcting oneself and not correcting the world, who have begun to see the importance of analysing oneself and trying to improve, and not analysing the world, for if you are going to analyse the world, thousands of lives are not enough to find out its defects. For a Viveki, the world is full of imperfection. Perfection is in the Deity, in Parabrahman. Perfection is not in the work of Prakriti. Prakriti is the very antithesis of Brahman. If Brahman is supreme perfection, Prakriti is all imperfection. If Brahman is Light, Prakriti is all darkness. The world of Prakriti is Apoorna, full of Doshas. Therefore, thousands of lives are not enough if we get ourselves caught in fault-finding. So, this faculty has to be directed towards oneself. Then only one's life gets transformed, and infinite scope is opened out to you to improve yourself and become better. But, if this faculty is turned outside, the entire world becomes to you a teacher of evil. For, that upon which you constantly fix your mind becomes the sustenance of your personality. Your personality feeds

upon, and grows and develops into, those things whose mental pictures the mind holds. This is a psychological fact. If you always contemplate on perfection, if you contemplate on beauty, if you contemplate on peace, you grow into the likeliness of perfection, beauty and peace. If you hold before yourself thoughts of imperfection, ugliness, and gloom, you will find everything so. If you always think of the biting cold of the Himalayas, the beauty of the snows will be lost for you. You see the beauty of the Full Moon day, but if at the same time you are thinking of the other side of the moon, that circle of intense blackness, blackness will be in your mind and heart and not the radiance of the Full Moon. The fault-finding nature is the greatest obstacle, because it for ever ties down the seeker to his lower Prakriti, to his defective Prakriti and he takes with him to the feet of the Guru, into the sanctuary of Yoga, into the pure spiritual path, that nature of the mind which has made him ever tied down to the lower sensual life of defects; and if this mind is taken to the sacred sanctuary of Yoga, instead of becoming the receiver of light, he will become the hugger of darkness, for he has taken hold of his Prakriti and he would not allow himself to let go out of it, and what happens? The light of the Guru, the light of Yoga, is completely barred out of his heart, because his impregnable wall of Dosha-drishti is within him, and therefore, to ward off that danger, the ancients gave him the Upadesh:

Yasya Deve Parabhaktih Yatha Deve Tatha Gurau,
Tasyaite Katitah-hyarthah Prakashante Mahatmanah.

To that great soul in whom there is extreme devotion to the Highest Divinity, God, and equal devotion to the Guru as there is to God, to that soul all the truths of the scriptures become revealed. And therefore, deification of the Guru has been specially put as a condition pre-requisite for approaching the spiritual preceptor in order to avoid this grave error of Dosha-drishti in the aspirant. If this error is removed, the iron wall is removed between the seeker and the perfected sage, and the grace of the Guru begins to flow to the disciple. You immerse a stone in the sea for ten thousand years, yet at the end you will find that the stone is the same stone which it was ten thousand years ago. The millions of tons of water that flowed on it did not change it, because it had made itself completely impervious to the influence of water. It is this nature of the aspirant, where he is satisfied with his own little knowledge and little personality, with all its self-assertive nature, with all its Rajasic tendency of clinging to its own pre-conceived notions, to its own pet conceptions—it is this that is the greatest bar to the fruition of Satsanga into the highest Sat-darshan. As long as the aspirant would cling firmly to his own old nature and refuse to admit the need of a change in himself, so long the Satsanga becomes absolutely barren of result. The aspirant must effect a change of attitude. He must accept, "I know less, the Guru knows more; I know less, and the saint has something to give me which I do not know". That attitude is the greatest requisite for the fruition of Satsang.

Now we go to the very root of the spiritual knowledge of the scriptures. What is Jnana Yoga? What is Bhakti Yoga? What is Karma Yoga? What is Raja Yoga? The very root of the whole question of spiritual realisation and emancipation lies in the theory of ignorance. They say, ignorance is the root. How does ignorance manifest in the individual soul? As Ahankara, as egoism. The root of the whole problem is the ego in the individual soul, and the moment the ego is removed, whatever is shines forth in all its splendour. That is your essential nature. That is Satchidananda. To remove the ego is the prime purpose of all Yoga. "When shall I be free? When 'I' ceases to be." When the ego-sense ceases to be, there is complete annihilation of I-ness and mine-ness and the Jiva attains salvation. He enjoys Atmic consciousness. Kaivalya Moksha is then and there for the being in whom the sense of 'I' gets completely annihilated. It is not necessary for him to go into a higher realm. Then and there salvation is attained by him. The bar to Knowledge, Atma-jnana, is the ego-sense, and ego-sense manifests variously. It manifests as ignorance, clinging to the body, 'I am this body', 'I am the mind', 'I am the senses'. *Adhyasa* is the mistaken identification of the all-perfect Self with the body, mind, Pranas and senses. So, remove *Adhyasa* by identifying yourself with the supreme all-pervading Truth. Again and again hammer into the mind the idea, "I am the Atma". That is the process of Vedanta. Therefore, break this aspect of ego which is there as *Adhyasa,* false identification.

As emotion, as attachment (this is mine, *Mama,*

Mama Iti) ego manifests itself. In order to remove this manifestation of the ego as attachment, they said, "Attach yourself to the Lord". This is Prema Marga. *Twameva Mata Cha Pita Twameva, Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha Twameva; Twameva Vidya, Dravinam Twameva, Twameva Sarvam, Mama Devadeva.* Thou alone art everything to me. There is no attachment for anything on this earth. All my mind is completely tied to that which is my own, my nearest, my dearest. That is the sublimation of the ego in its expression as attachment, as love, as affection.

And then, this ego is also found in another aspect of personality, as superimposition, super-arrogation, pride, taking credit for everything, *Abhimana*—"I have done that, I am a master of the Vedas, I have attained proficiency in that science". In everything man begins to take Abhimana, and entertain the feeling, "I am the doer, I am the possessor of everything". Crush this *Abhimana*. "I am nothing, I do nothing. Everything is being done by the Lord. *Hari* is the *Kartha*. Everything is being done by the power of the Lord. I am only an instrument". *Nimittamatram Bhava Savyasachin*, says the great scripture, Gita, which shows man how to act without doership and attachment. Therefore, completely dedicating yourself to the Lord, saying, 'I am not the doer, I am only an instrument, everything is being done by Him', you should work in the world. This is Karma Yoga.

Thus, Jnana Yoga removes the manifestation of the ego as *Adhyasa* or false identification, Bhakti Yoga sublimates the ego as emotion and attachment, and Karma Yoga destroys the ego as *Abhi-*

mana. What does Raja Yoga do? For all these manifestations of the ego, mind is the root cause. Therefore, destroy that mind. What is the first manifestation of the mind on the surface? The subconscious mind is full of latent Samskaras. There you cannot go. What is the prime aspect of the mind which manifests itself on the surface? The conscious mind, the Vritti, ideation, mentation. The subtle Vasana which is latent inside as impression becomes manifest as idea. As soon as the idea comes, chop it off. Immediately smash it and put it down. *Yogaschittavrittinirodhah*. Yoga is the destruction of the modifications of the mind. Completely annihilate all the ideas that arise in the mind, and that is done by deep meditation, complete concentration. Many ideas go on cropping up in the mind. Make them lesser, make the field of the Vasanas lesser, and then make them into one idea, and ultimately that idea also should go. Raja Yoga is the technique of completely rooting out the mind, which is the field for the manifestation of the ego in all its various aspects as Adhyasa, Mamata, attachment, Abhimana, etc., and when the mind is destroyed, the ego will go away. That is Raja Yoga. Asana, Pranayama, etc., are only preparations for concentration and meditation.

So, what important truth all these things reveal? The great enemy of man is the ego. The great enemy of man is the sense of 'I', with all its countless ramifications. Everything that holds him down to ignorance and Samsara is nothing but the various Vikaras of the root-cause, Ahankara, and all branches of Yoga ultimately aim only at the removal of Ahankara, and Ahankara is removed if

Satsang is carried out. Satsang is a wonderful technique where this root process is automatically worked out by the influence of a higher personality, provided you have fully understood the importance of it. Yoga means the complete pulverization and eradication of the ego in all its aspects. Provided an aspirant approaches a sage with this knowledge, what will he do? He will always be on the guard to see that his ego does not assert itself. He will never do the blunder of going to the Guru with his ego intact and clinging to it.

AN ILLUMINATING STORY

There is a story of a person, a Kathavachak, doing Katha in a durbar all the year round. The king got interested in getting himself freed from Samsar. He said, "He must be able to free me from this Samsar, I have got no peace of mind. Perhaps he will give me knowledge". On the next day he said to the man, the Kathavachak, "I want knowledge. Give me the secret of getting out of this Samsaric bondage". The Kathavachak trembled in fear. He was in a dilemma. He did not know what to do. The king said, "If you do not free me from Samsara, your job will go and your head also along with it". The Kathavachak went to his house, dejected. He had a wise daughter, who was perhaps a Yoga-bhrashta. She asked him, "Why are you so gloomy?". He replied, "My child, my last days have come. The king is asking me to do the impossible. The king asks me to give him that knowledge which will free him from Samsara. What do I know? I do not have that knowledge myself. I am doing Katha only, and that too to run this household. The king will take

my head if I do not give him the knowledge tomorrow". The girl said, "Do not worry. You go and tell the king that the answer will be given". He said, "All right", for a dying man catches any straw in order to save his life. The girl aged eight or ten years said, "Take me to the palace tomorrow, when you go". The father went to the palace with the girl the next day. She asked him to start the Katha as usual. But hardly had he proceeded with his Katha for fifteen minutes, when the silence of the durbar was broken by a loud wailing noise. All people were wondering who was crying. The girl was crying at the top of her voice, "Please release me, please release me". She was fastening herself tightly to a pillar. All people tried to disentangle her from the pillar, but could not; she was holding the pillar tightly and crying, "Release me, release me". The king got angry and he asked, "What a silly girl you are! What do you mean? You are yourself catching hold of the pillar and you are asking us to remove you". Immediately the girl burst into laughter. The king asked, "Why are you laughing?". The girl replied, "I am laughing, because that is exactly what you are asking my father to do. You are catching hold of the palace, you are attached to the palace, to your property, your status, and you want him to release you from something which you yourself are clinging to". The king was satisfied with the answer of the girl. He learned a lesson. A man does not get released by another. He has to release himself.

SATSANG BECOMES FRUITFUL ONLY WHEN THE EGO IS SHED

You have to let go what you are clinging to. So

it depends upon the aspirant himself to let go his clinging, which belongs to his lower self, which belongs to the old unregenerate nature. If he lets go that clinging, then immediately Satsang becomes fruitful, Guru-bhakti springs from that heart. Until then, there is no Guru-bhakti, because he is devoted to himself, he is devoted to his own little views, to his own little, so-called principles. There is no principle. There should be no 'your own' and 'my own'. What is Guru's opinion, that should be your opinion. Biblically saying, "Empty thyself, and I will fill thee". This is the root meaning of this utterance: empty yourself of the ego and what all it means. And what all it means? You have the classical description: Kama, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Matsarya. All these things have gathered round the ego. These are the spokes and the ego is the wheel's hub. So, first of all, you will have to give up clinging to your lower self, your principles. You say, 'my understanding'. Your understanding is wrong understanding, for if the seeker had rightly understood, he would be a saint. All understanding has to be offered to the Guru and we have to empty ourselves and say, "Give me understanding as you would wish me to have". Every man has got his own notions. Right understanding can come only from the Guru. Our wrong understanding, our improper vision has to be removed, and as long as the wrong understanding and vision is kept in mind, there is no room for correct vision and correct understanding to come. Therefore they said, "*Satsangatwe Nissangatwam*". *Nissangatwam* of what you have in your mind. It is very difficult to renounce oneself. One can renounce

wealth, wife, worldly life, property, house, society, everything, but extremely hard, extremely difficult it is to renounce oneself, and it is essential if the seeker has to benefit from Satsang, if he has to become a real disciple and develop Guru-bhakti. It is only at the moment when you renounce yourself that Satsang becomes effective, it begins to operate, you begin to have contact with Truth. Companionship of Truth comes to that man who renounces himself, because it is untruth to consider oneself as this little self, this petty personality. The moment he renounces this, then companionship with Truth starts. For him, Satsang begins. For him only, Guru-bhakti is possible.

This, in short, is the essence of Satsang, the renunciation of one's own self and starting companionship of the Truth that is within us and that is manifest as the Satguru and as the saint. As we have said, all saints are embodiments of the Supreme Truth. Therefore, in order to live the divine life, one has to die to one's own self. Renunciation of the inner self, this little petty self, is the secret of the fruition of Satsang. Yudhishthira had that renunciation, Radha had that renunciation, the disciples of Christ had it. But those who do not have that, even though they live with these Avatars, live without any fruit, because they live in companionship with their own little self.

Why Svadhyaya?

When the highest Truth is well said in a single phrase "Tat Twam Asi" (That Thou Art), where is the need for endless lecturing and hearing on spiritual matters, and for writing and reading on the fundamentals of Sadhana?

One simple Brahma Sankalpa produced these countless universes. When the time comes, in the twinkling of an eye, you will realise the Self and attain liberation. While you are in a dark room, you grope in the dark and almost endlessly search for the torch. You stumble over many things and knock your head here and there. At last, you get the torch within your grasp. No more of this groping in the darkness, no more trials and travails; instantly there is light in the room. It is the search that takes a long time. It is the preparatory step in Sadhana that takes a considerable time.

NEED FOR CONSTANT LIGHT

And then, even when you feel that the Truth is within your grasp, you ought to be vigilant, till it becomes part and parcel of your consciousness, till you actually live in it. It is not enough if merely

the light of Truth illumines a dark corner; you must live in It. When in a room you light the lamp, darkness vanishes; but if you put the light out, the darkness returns. Till the sun rises, there is need for a constant flame of light in the room to keep it illumined. Similarly, in the dark cavern of your heart, there is a lamp lit. It is Bhakti or a little understanding of the omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence of God. This gives you sufficient light to see things clearly and understand the nature of this universe, the Self and God. But, if you put this light out by negligence or wilful indifference to Sadhana in the false belief that you have attained the goal, you will again be enveloped by the darkness. You must keep the flame bright till the sun of Self-realisation arises within you. Then, there will be light and light alone everywhere. The darkness has vanished for ever. Light becomes part of the very nature. Darkness dare not approach you. What was Sadhana done with effort previously becomes Svabhava or second-nature now. Bhakti is the aspirant's Sadhana and the saint's Svabhava. Righteousness is the aspirant's Sadhana, the sage's Svabhava. At no time, therefore, these things are given up. The aspirant studies and hears the divine Leelas of the Lord as a necessary part of his Sadhana; the Siddha listens to them with great joy, as he naturally loves to listen to the Leelas of the Lord.

TO KEEP THE MIND FULLY ALIVE TO THE IDEAL, READ SCRIPTURES DAILY

If, for a moment, the aspirant relaxes his vigilance and falls into a spiritual or ethical slumber,

then the lower pull asserts itself, and immediately, the allegiance shifts from the higher to the lower self. If, at that time, he comes into contact with sensual objects, there takes place a set-back in his spiritual life. Therefore, his alert vigilance and spiritual awareness, the state of being always awakened, has necessarily to be kept up at this stage.

One of the ways of doing this is Svadhyaya, study of scriptures. One of the most powerful methods of keeping the mind fully alive to the Ideal is reading of scriptures and the lives of saints daily. For, when you read the lives of saints and spiritual books, a host of powerful and positive ideas rush to your mind and at once your mental powers are sharpened. They at once inspire the man and lift him and enable him to conquer the lower forces in his every-day life. Therefore, Svadhyaya should not be given up even for a single day in the life of the Sadhaka.

BE FOR EVER A STUDENT

Study of scriptures bearing the sacred truths propounded by men of wisdom, and listening to the Leelas of the Lord, are never to be given up by sincere Sadhakas, at whatever stage of spiritual evolution they may be. Are you more advanced than Sri Sukadeva who was a born sage and Parivrajaka? Are you more advanced than the great sages who assembled at Naimisaranya to listen to Srimad Bhagavata being narrated by Sri Suta? Learn a lesson from these illustrious examples of great sages. Be for ever a Sadhaka. Be for ever an aspirant thirsting after spiritual knowledge. Be for ever a student.

He and he alone is an old man who feels that he has learnt enough and has need for no more knowledge. He is a man dead while alive who does not feel a compelling eagerness to listen to the stories of the Lord's Leelas or to spiritual discourses. You can stave off old age and even death itself by preserving within you the youthful zeal and a devout eagerness to learn more, to practise more, and to realise more deeply, the great spiritual Truth which is inexhaustible, in spite of having been extolled and expounded by millions of saints, sages and seers from time immemorial.

SVADHYAYA PREVENTS 'BACK-SLIDING'

Moreover, forget not that on all sides you are surrounded by materialistic influences. If you are slack even for a day, the evil forces around you would find their opportunity and play havoc. The ball dropped on the top of the staircase takes less than a split-second to reach the ground, whereas it took much longer to take it up. In a moment of heedlessness, much could be lost. Life is short, time is fleeting; you cannot afford to lose an inch of the ground that you have gained with so much effort, in your battle against this formidable foe—Satan, Maya, Mara or the evil mind.

THE TWIN SAVIOURS—SATSANG AND SVADHYAYA

Side by side with your work, you must do Japa, meditation, study of scriptures, Sat-vichar and Sat-vyavahar. Do not let this monkey-mind have a mi-

nute's respite. It is here that Satsang and spiritual literature come to your great aid. They are your saviours. How many sublime thoughts are brought to your very doors by the scriptures! Study the pages of the scriptures carefully. Underline the sentences that strike you as having a direct bearing on your life. Reflect over them in your leisure moments. Thus would you find that you are able to surmount many obstacles and jump over many pitfalls. Is the mind disinclined to read these passages over and over again? That is Maya's potent weapon to put you to sleep. Beware! Are you not taking the same food over and over again? You will have to go on reading and re-reading the self-same spiritual sentences over and over again till they are indelibly engraved on the tablet of your heart, till they become part and parcel of your inner nature.

REPETITION AUGMENTS INNER STRENGTH

Then will a fortress of Nirodha Samskaras be erected within you. Repetition gives strength. Repetition pushes the ideas into the innermost chambers of your heart and mind. Then the ideas will percolate your subconscious mind. The evil thoughts lurking there will be scorched and annihilated. You may not even know what wonders have been effected within you. Such is the salutary influence of repeatedly studying the same spiritual text. That is why our ancestors insisted on our ceremoniously reading a text like the Gita, Ramayana, or Bhagavata regularly every day, with faith and devotion. They will augment your inner strength. Your will will grow

stronger. When thus the entire inner nature is transformed into divine nature, then a single effort to meditate will lead you to Nirvikalpa Samadhi and superconsciousness. You will then realise God in the twinkling of an eye.

The Divine Life Society

The Divine Life Society was founded by His Holiness Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj in 1936 for the widest possible propagation of the most precious and the best elements of the great culture and living idealism of India. The Headquarters of this Society are housed at Sivanandanagar, on the banks of the Ganges in Rishikesh, at the foothills of the Himalayas. The Society has as its aim the awakening of all humanity to the true and lofty purpose of life, enlightening them on the various means and methods of attaining the Goal, and inspiring them and urging them to strive for its attainment.

The Divine Life Society carries out its object of a world-wide revival of spirituality through publication of books, pamphlets and magazines dealing scientifically with all the aspects of Yoga and Vedanta, religion, philosophy and ancient medicine; holding and arranging religious conferences and discourses; establishing training centres for the practice of Yoga and the revival of culture; and taking such other steps from time to time as may be necessary for bringing about a quick moral and spiritual regeneration in the world.

An allopathic General Hospital attached to the

Society, with arrangements for indoor patients, does valuable service in making available free medical and surgical aid to the suffering. The reputed Ayurvedic Pharmaceutical Works prepares genuine and high-quality Ayurvedic medicines that have gained a name in India and abroad. A well-equipped Eye-Hospital does immense service to the patients of the neighbourhood and provides them with indoor treatment. The Annakshetra (common kitchen) is open to the poor and the needy and any pilgrim requiring such assistance. A well-fitted Photo Studio equipped on modern lines has prepared valuable movie films of the different Yoga exercises and Yoga processes. A beautiful Temple and Prayer Hall provide scope for devotional exercises and prayer in an ideal setting. Regular worship is conducted daily for the weal of humanity. A Yoga-museum serves to give in brief and at a glance the essence of Yoga and Vedanta. The Society runs a "Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy" which trains students from all parts of India as well as from other countries like Europe, England, America, Africa, Australia and Malaya. The Academy is established to impart specialised knowledge of the different techniques of Yoga and to prepare the students for the higher meditation on the spiritual path as also to train them in the unselfish service of humanity based on the spirit of universal love and brotherhood. The Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy Press does the work of publication of books and periodicals for making spiritual and cultural knowledge available.

Membership of the Divine Life Society is open to all those who pledge themselves to practise Ahim-